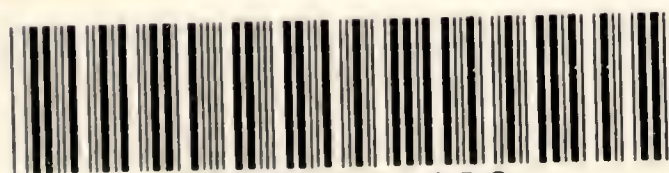




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EASTERN MORALS**

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# WESTERN MEN WITH EASTERN MORALS

BY

W. N. WILLIS

AUTHOR OF

“WHAT GERMANY WANTS,” “THE WHITE SLAVES OF LONDON,” ETC.

WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY R. A. BENNETT,  
EDITOR OF “TRUTH”

LONDON  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

MR. WILLIS has asked me to write a few words of introduction to this book because, to some extent, it covers ground which was the subject of articles and correspondence which appeared in *Truth* two years ago under the title "Western Men and Eastern Morals." The facts which were then brought to light created a considerable stir. They were in no respect disputed, but they gave rise to very wide differences of opinion. In this country the general sentiments expressed were horror and indignation. In the East, as was to be expected, the mode of life into which unmarried British residents very frequently drop found many strenuous apologists and defenders.

In the following book Mr. Willis, approaching the subject from a somewhat different standpoint, throws a new and lurid light upon it. The significance of his book lies in its revelation of the effect upon women of the moral standards which so many European men consider good enough for them when they settle in Asia. He shows us how the "go-as-you-please" method of regulating sex relations works out for native women and their Eurasian daughters. What should bring the matter more closely home to us, he links up the markets of the East with the "White Slave" traffic of the West, and points to horrors

and abominations in connection with the traffic surpassing any of those which are at present exercising the public mind in England and forcing Parliament into drastic action.

When the prevalence of undisguised concubinage among settlers in Burma and the Malay Peninsula was under discussion in *Truth*, apologists for the system had much to say on the social and physiological reasons which tend to justify such arrangements. There were some weak points in the argument, and notably this—that nothing like the conditions for which Burma has become notorious have ever prevailed among our countrymen in India proper (Assam appears to be an exception), though the argument would apply with equal force to India if it were intrinsically sound. But be that as it may, no argument based upon what is convenient, expedient, or even necessary for men can be accepted as conclusive of this question without equal regard to the interest of women in it. Those who read the following pages will find presented with ghastly fidelity the women's side of the question. I do not think that any one who peruses all the facts which Mr. Willis has here collected can come to the end without a feeling that such things must be stopped, however inconvenient the consequences may be to Western men temporarily domiciled in the East.

Personally, I do not agree with all the remedies that Mr. Willis advocates for the evils which he describes. But he has personal knowledge of the country and the local conditions, which I have not, and it is not necessary here to debate this side of the question. There is, how-



ever, one aspect of it on which I should like to say a word.

This matter first came under my notice in 1910 in connexion with regulations laid down by certain firms, tending to discourage the marriage of their employees in Burma. In the course of the discussion which followed in *Truth* much was said of the inconvenience of having married men in such services and as to the unsuitability of up-country life for young English married ladies. Nothing that was said on either point, however, was calculated to convince anybody who was not predisposed to accept the argument. So far as business considerations are concerned, there are others, higher and more important to humanity generally, to which they must yield, and constantly have to yield. As to the suitability of up-country life to young English wives, that is a matter of which the ladies themselves are the best judges. Plenty of young Englishwomen rough it with their husbands or brothers on the outskirts of civilisation in Canada, South Africa, and elsewhere, and there is no reason why they should not do the same thing in the East if they are willing. Hundreds of young Englishmen have been going out every year of late to Burma and all the countries of the "Middle East." Most of them are too young to take wives, but what reason is there why their sisters should not go with them? What, doubtless, is highly inconvenient to the British residents in "Darkest Asia" is the intrusion of Englishwomen into communities where the majority of their countrymen are living in concubinage with native women. But if this is so, is not the inference that if Englishmen

were encouraged to bring their female relatives into the country, and if married men were not given to understand that they are not wanted, the whole social conditions would be transformed at once? We see the striking difference between India and Burma in this matter. Is it not explained in a great measure by the fact that the British community in India has, throughout its existence, been largely leavened by British women? The lesson which seems to stand out most conspicuously in the following pages is this—that nothing but evil can follow from encouraging communities of men only to grow up in colonial dependencies, and that all who have the welfare of such dependencies at heart should make it their business to encourage the emigration of women side by side with that of men. Nor is this only desirable from the point of view of the dependencies. The practice of shipping abroad half your young men and leaving all the young women behind creates other difficulties and troubles at home. The balance of nature is upset. East and West each suffer the consequences in their several ways, and, as usually happens when social arrangements are dislocated, the suffering falls hardest on women.

THE EDITOR OF "TRUTH."



# WESTERN MEN WITH EASTERN MORALS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

ONE of the most difficult problems which await the solution of the Empire-builder is that provided through the relationships that invariably spring up between men and women—black and white, or brown, copper-colour, or yellow and white, as the case may be. Hitherto it has been the custom to slur over the question, and to burke any discussion of it. It is not a nice subject. The good people at home have a dim sort of idea that even if East of Suez, the “best is like the worst,” the average Englishman is no more prone to think that there “ain’t no ten commandments,” than if he were domiciled in Clapham or Newcastle. Those who know better do not imagine their duty is to undeceive the others. “Why,” they argue, “should the Sunday afternoon slumber of the satisfied Christian citizen be disturbed by thoughts of the adoption by his white relatives overseas of Oriental manners and customs, or

Oriental ethics? They do not know our needs. They are not aware of our temptations. They cannot realise the position of the white man in the distant outposts of civilisation without any human companionship to relieve the tedium of existence. It is far better for them to cherish the bliss of ignorance, and allow us to square our conduct and conscience in our own way."

Yet there are powerful reasons why that ignorance should be dissipated. Day by day there is a steady flow of adolescent white men Eastward. At least they and their parents should know exactly the conditions which immediately on their arrival they will be called upon to face. If for no other reason I should feel justified in publishing the information bearing on this subject which, in the course of some years' travel in the East, has come into my possession. But this is only one reason. Of even greater importance is the question of the effect of the illicit relationships between white men and coloured women—the effect upon the native mind produced by the intermingling of the races—and the great and growing problem presented by the rapid growth of an Eurasian population which is, to all intents and purposes, orphaned as regards the male parent at birth.

As regards the first of these reasons, the case for publicity was succinctly set forth in *Truth* in a series of articles which attracted my notice while I was in Singapore in 1910. These articles were prompted by some disclosures supplied to the Editor by a gentleman who had lately returned from Burma. He had gone there in the service of an English company chiefly engaged in collecting and exporting teak

from the Burmese forests. When he joined he was considerably older than most young men who take service with this company, and after he had been in the country a year or two he married an English lady. When he notified the corporation of his intention, he was informed that they “looked with but little favour on the marriage of so junior a man,” though they did not actually forbid it; but he was given to understand that the corporation would give him no special treatment in the matter of stations, and no special house allowance, and so on.

This he did not in the least object to. But in the course of a few months he found strong reason to believe that his marriage had had a decidedly prejudicial effect on his treatment, and apparently also his prospects, and after making a definite statement of his grievances he tendered his resignation. He came home, and the corporation on parting with him gave him an excellent testimonial, which clearly shows that if he had been unfavourably treated, as he alleged, it was not in consequence of any shortcomings in the discharge of his duties.

The unpleasant part of this gentleman’s allegations was that while marriage was penalised by the corporation, concubinage, which prevailed widely among the staff, was tolerated, and by comparison with marriage actually encouraged. As regards the first condition, the corporation thus formulated their views in a circular issued to their employees :

“As we now have among our Up-country staff a number of married men, it seems to us that the time has arrived

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when it is necessary to commit to paper the attitude of the corporation towards married couples.

“ 1. The corporation do not undertake to provide house accommodation for the wives of married men, nor house allowance in lieu thereof.

“ 2. Married men may not take their wives on tour without first obtaining sanction from Rangoon. Any sanction obtained applies only to the particular tour for which it is requested.

“ 3. The corporation cannot supply elephants, carts, coolies, etc., or in any manner assist married men in taking their wives with them on tour.”

Contrast with this the attitude of the corporation towards the other condition of things, as testified to by the gentlemen above-mentioned. (1) The corporation, if they did not undertake to provide house accommodation for the native concubines of their staff, made no objection to the women residing with their proprietors, and it was the general custom for them to occupy official quarters. (2) Unmarried men could take their concubines on tour without obtaining any sanction from Rangoon, and, in point of fact, habitually did so. (3) The corporation, if they did not supply elephants, carts, coolies, etc., to assist unmarried men in taking their concubines on tour, made no objection to elephants, carts, coolies, etc., being used for this purpose, and this again was done regularly.

In each particular, therefore, there was an official differentiation against the holy estate of matrimony, and



in favour of the irregular relationship. After this, whatever may be the truth of the allegation that a man had been unfavourably treated in other ways because he preferred to get married, there was nothing *prima facie* incredible in the allegation. On the contrary, it seems highly probable that when it is a very general practice for officials of all grades to keep native mistresses in their quarters, and take them about with them on tour, they would feel the presence of married English ladies in the country awkward and embarrassing, and do their best to discourage it by making things uncomfortable for husbands.

Commenting on this state of affairs *Truth* remarked that :

“The state of things which has grown up and appears to be spreading in this particular corner of the British Empire is not one which any Englishman, however far he may be from squeamish about such things, can contemplate without some feeling of shame. It is certainly not one about which people at home should be kept in the dark, though it is not precisely a pleasant matter for public discussion. The whole bearings of the scandal are not disclosed in the few facts mentioned above. For the due appreciation of them it should be understood that large numbers of children are born of these irregular unions between Englishmen and native women. At the best, the position of the Eurasian in the East is an unhappy one. What sort of life is before the illegitimate half-caste progeny of our countrymen in Burma? We are bragging every day in print and on platforms about our ‘Imperial

Mission ' and all the rest of it. What sort of witnesses to the ennobling influences of British civilisation are all these outcast Hagars and Ishmaels from Burma ?

“ Again, let it be remembered that the recruits to the service of companies and firms in the East are no more than boys. They arrive by almost every boat—scarcely out of their teens. They are assailed with the attention of native procurers almost before they have landed. They quickly have the customs of the country brought home to them by the example of their seniors and superior officers. The company they serve, though it may ‘ look with but little favour on the marriage of so junior a man,’ has not the slightest objection to his sharing his quarters with a native concubine. Can there be any wonder at the result ? I can cite the case of a boy whose first half-caste offspring was born to him before he was one-and-twenty, and there is no reason to suppose he is the only one. This will be unpleasant reading to many British fathers and mothers who have rejoiced to see their sons started so young on a career of promise in the gorgeous East. But it is well that the truth should be brought home betimes to all who may contemplate despatching their children to this unknown land. Another class who may learn something useful from what has been revealed above are the directors and shareholders of companies exploiting the remoter regions of Burma, and perhaps some other Oriental countries. They may not feel themselves answerable for the morals of all their employees ; but there must be some here and there whose consciences will recognise some responsibility for the fate of English lads employed in their

service, and, I should hope, for the people of the country from which their dividends are drawn, to say nothing of the credit of the British name in the eyes of the world.”

In the foregoing extract *Truth* rightly concluded that the whole bearings of the scandal had not been disclosed, and in the discussion which followed a good many broad hints were given as to the easy way in which European exiles in Oriental lands accommodate themselves to the local standard of morals. Naturally, many whose eyes were opened for the first time to the existing conditions of things were aghast. Their state of mind is typically presented by the following letter which an “English-woman” sent to *Truth*:

“I am one of those who have rejoiced to see a son—in my case an only son—started on a career full of promise in the East, in the service of a company which held out highly attractive prospects. Consoled by this thought I bore the bitter parting, and for three years I have been comforted to hear that he was getting on and had good hopes for the future. Had I known what you tell us now about English life in Burma, no power on earth would have forced me to send him to such a country. He is a good boy, I am sure, and I pray that he may be delivered from temptation. But should he have fallen under the influence of the examples which he may see around him, how can I ever forgive myself for having sent him to such a life? My poor boy was only just nineteen when he left home.

“How can Englishmen, brought up in good homes and in famous schools, sink into such iniquity as soon as they find themselves released from the restraint of civilised surroundings! Above all, how can the heads of English firms or directors of companies countenance such licence! These gentlemen, I suppose, profess to be respectable husbands and fathers themselves. Have they no thought for the boys they are tempting to lives of shame in their service? I hope, sir, you will not let this subject drop until all fathers and mothers know what life in the East really means. Then, perhaps, these companies will find themselves forced to do their duty to their employees.”

There is to be found in this letter an expression of opinion which is likely to be the general one until all the facts are fully known. But it is not the only one, and the other side of the question was ably argued by an officer of the Army Medical Corps in the following communication :

“As an Englishman who has recently spent several years in Burma, I hope you will allow me to point out some of the difficulties of the situation.

“In connection with this rather delicate subject an Englishman in Burma, or for that matter in any other country, has four possible alternatives. He may practise strict continence ; he can marry ; he may make an irregular union with a woman of the country ; or he must run the risk of becoming infected with certain noxious diseases, which I need not specify.

“The first is easy nowhere, certainly not in a Burmese



jungle, where often there may be no other white man to speak to. Many noble attempts at continence in the Farther East have ended in melancholy, drink, or other undesirable courses, only resulting in complete mental, moral, or physical shipwreck. I do not say strict continence in the East is impossible, but it is for the majority a counsel of perfection.

“ The second and best alternative, of course, is marriage ; but marriage to a white woman in Burma has all the pecuniary and other anxieties attaching to marriage in England, plus a climate that is particularly injurious to white women and young children ; and also there are the lonely, unsociable surroundings which many English women soon find intolerable. Sooner or later, for one reason or another, most married women in Burma ‘ go home,’ and are in no particular hurry to rejoin their husbands, who are thus left alone to make the best of one or other of the three unsatisfactory alternatives I have mentioned.

“ Trading companies in the East know these facts only too well, and it is becoming a general scandal in the East that both officials and business men are constantly using the delicate health of their wives as a pretext for avoiding unhealthy or lonely stations, or as a lever to demand extra leave, extra allowances, or extra accommodation. Naturally, both commercial companies and governments are beginning to kick against this. Is it fair to blame them for doing so ?

“ And now for the other two alternatives. Concubinage, however dreadful in its aspect it may seem to those who live in Piccadilly or Fleet Street, is not, under the circum-

stances, so necessarily demoralising in a Burmese trading post. For consider the circumstances. A young commercial agent, or official, is often away in some remote trading post for months together, where there is either little or no white society—often there is no other white man within a day's ride of him. He is lonely, and perhaps gets depressed (a very frequent and bad mental symptom in Burma, where insanity amongst isolated Englishmen is fairly common). A housekeeper of some kind is necessary, if only to keep his numerous domestics in order and to prevent petty thefts. From her, too, he can rapidly learn the language of the district and the habits and feelings of the natives. His meals and clothes want looking after, and during the spells of interminable rain he wants a companion, and one by preference who knows the ways of the country, and who can save him in this way more than she costs to keep. She will, at any rate, allow no other 'frail' ladies to hang around his bungalow in the evening, which they would otherwise most certainly do, with, again, undesirable results. I need not dwell on this aspect; it includes the dreadful fourth alternative, which not even 'Exeter Hall' in its saner moments can really desire.

"Burma is a country in which there is a tendency for the health of even the temperate Englishman to break down. Malaria and dysentery, ill-feeding, and exposure to the sun are at work on his constitution. The lonely life that he may have to lead soon breeds depression—the half-brother to insanity. All these tendencies are most certainly aggravated by the strain of an enforced conti-

nence, which, unnatural and difficult at home, is more than difficult in the climate of the Farther East.

“I quite agree with all you say regarding the shameful neglect by many Englishmen of their ‘natural’ born offspring in Burma. Such neglect to provide proper clothing, residence, and education should mean imprisonment or, at least, cashiering. The affiliation laws should be most strictly enforced for the benefit of the unsophisticated Burmese women, who, after trusting to the honour and generosity of the English ‘sahib,’ are but too often shamefully abandoned with their half-caste children, without any means for their maintenance.”

This defence of the practical system of concubinage in Burma is supplemented by the testimony of a senior officer in the Indian Service whose attitude may be taken as that of the typical layman who has had some experience of life in the East :

“It is perhaps not surprising to find the Londoner, though he lives in such an exceedingly brittle house of his own, ready to throw the first stone at his sinning Burmese brother. But poor human nature is much the same the whole world over. It would no doubt be better for the morals and health of every young Englishman, whether he lives in London or Burma, to marry young. But it is very difficult for a man in the middle or upper classes, who has no means of his own, and has his way in the world to make, to marry one of his own standing without hopelessly handicapping himself in the race of life. The Burman system of concubinage, with its attendant evils, is, after all, more



moral than a less permanent tie—it has the sanction of Scripture ; and although it fits in badly with our modern and Western ideas, we must remember that our present substitute for it is a great deal worse.

“ In former days, at any rate, the irregular tie referred to brought no loss of self-respect to the lady ; but I think if you had taken her for a walk down Piccadilly and explained to her the profession of many of the well-dressed ladies she passed she might well retort that your anxious fathers may consider their sons as safe in Burma as they are in London.

“ When we bring up our girls so that they can live a frugal life, and be a help and not a hindrance to a poor man struggling in London or sweating in a Burman jungle, we shall be able to cope with the vice in our own country, and can then turn to purify the morals of the East.”

In the latter defence there is to be found a lot of loose reasoning. It is absurd to suppose that because there are opportunities for immorality in London and other great towns a boy may as well be sent to Burma as anywhere else. It bears no relation to fact or reason. As well might it be argued that there can be no objection to a young man joining a gambling club because he can gamble anywhere if he chooses ; or that there is any harm in his consorting with friends who get drunk daily because there are public-houses in most of our streets.

But there is a great deal to be said in regard to the dangers of prostitution in the East, and before turning

attention to the question of concubinage it may be just as well to fully understand what it means. For this purpose I would call attention to the following pen-picture of Malay Street, Singapore, in which I truthfully record its sights as they appeared to me.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MALAY STREET GATE

AFTER 3 p.m. each weekday and on every Sunday, Malay Street at Singapore is one of the sights of the East. It is the great gaudy centre of the Babylonian quarter where thousands of prostitutes of every nationality under the sun congregate on the verandahs of the houses and openly solicit the passers-by. The broad open verandahs are of stone, and are raised, stage-like, some three feet from the roadway. On them the women pose in easy chairs or stools or on carpets, smoking cigarettes, laughing, chatting and accosting each passer-by with their eternal, "Oh, do come in here. We nice gal—so nice. Oh, come in—do come in—please." Heavily painted, and decked out with tinselled roses in their hair, low-necked blouses, silk stockings, and worked slippers, their profession is unmistakable. At eventime the women, at the bidding of the owners of the establishments, re-enter the houses to prepare for the evening pandemonium. Over five hundred of these dens are centred in and about Malay Street, each house containing from eight to twenty-five girls, and, as the death-rate is heavy, the great army of procurers is necessarily kept busy. Many of these dens are very unsafe to enter,

murder and robbery being very common occurrences, while death certificates are cheap. In some, however, a man and his money are considered safe; that is, if he orders liquor lavishly and pays promptly. The goodwill of such a house will fetch from £2000 to £2500 cash down in the open market.

My sponsors upon my visit to this district were a rollicking lot of young men of the bull-dog breed. All were well educated and in good jobs, earning good money, which burnt their fingers as they momentarily held it, before it passed out as "suds through a sink" into the sewers of Malay Street. We walked through street after street, every one of them being crowded to its utmost capacity—for the people almost live in the open in the East. The night was one of heavenly beauty. The moon played on the rippling waters of the bay beyond. The reflection of hundreds and hundreds of electric lights danced on the water. The mailboats, gunboats, fishing-boats, ferry-boats, and craft of every size and almost every nationality under the sun, lay at their moorings in the peaceful free harbour of Singapore, the "Key to the East"—the high road to Hell!

Beyond the bay, the foliage-clad hills were black against the sky, whilst a cool breeze from off the rippling waters played upon the sweltering city. Nature was sleeping in perfect peace in Eastern grandeur, "Where all—save the spirit of man—is divine." Huge crowds of mixed, very mixed, humanity were assembled in the open; in the streets many groups were gathered, smoking, eating, and talking, laughing and singing, in every tongue,



playing at cards, pitch and toss and shuttlecock, while the banging and twanging of weird musical instruments alone would have told one that we were in no Western city.

White, black, copper-colour, pepper-and-salt colour, salmon colour, and every colour under the sun, of man, woman, or child, were in the streets, jostling, playing, laughing, and jabbering as though the workers of Babel were making holiday in the streets of Singapore. It was truly a sight to arrest the attention and tickle the imagination.

Men, women, and children were eating their suppers from a thousand-and-one travelling restaurants, food-carts, and cans, barrows, and baskets. The intermixture of men and women, in flaming colours of dress—or no dress at all, save a loin cloth—told you plainly that you were in Singapore, where “Never a beggar need despair, and every rogue has a chance,” where men quickly learn Eastern morals and imbibe its passions.

The mass of people seemed happy. Their hard lots were made soft by the peaceful security they enjoy in the open, unmolested, unrestricted British rule. Thus we strutted along the crowded streets, each man feeling instinctively that he was on the broad path. The hot blood of youth burned triumphantly in my companions’ veins, and, needless to say, caution is dead when the hot blood of youth burns.

One of them was particularly lively. He was a splendid sample of healthy British manhood—had a good billet in a mercantile concern, his people being well-to-do at home.



His mother, sister, and two brothers were highly thought of in the village in which their family had lived for a couple of hundred years or more.

Before this youth came to the East he and his family had carried on choir practice in the old village church—where his mother and sisters now prayed that every blessing and contentment, coupled with prosperity and peace, might rest with him. Like many other youngsters he wanted to “see life.” He argued that there could be little or no harm in just having a peep, only one peep, into the life of Malay Street. So he went jauntily along at the head of the party with an elastic step and a lively mind. He was like a youngster going to the circus, although the temporary seats were reputed not to be safe. Still he would go. He wanted to see Malay Street in gay company. So we proceeded until we reached the door of one of the best-known accommodation houses in that notable quarter where the British tourist gets a “bird’s-eye view” of Oriental life, and is so fascinated with its colour and movement that he does not realise the underlying foulness for which it stands.

The door opened, and the proprietress of the establishment welcomed us with a gracious broad grin, that almost cracked her face. She led the way, all smiles, through a screened door. She fairly embraced several of the party. She was so overpowering in her welcome that one instinctively felt one’s pockets to make sure his money was not gone.

“Oh, it is so kind of you gentlemen to come and see an old woman,” she said. “It is too kind, it is too kind,

Do come into de parlour.” She fussed and flushed and beamed with delight and repeated for the hundredth time, “It is too kind”—to enter her house where I, at least, thought one might conveniently get one’s throat cut without the asking!

She led the way up a narrow creaky staircase about twenty steps. The door opened with a spring, and we were in a long, spacious room. It occupied the whole of the second floor. This was the general room—a sort of patchouli splashed guests’ room, where visitors rest, and drink “fire-water” called whisky to steady their nerves and inflame their blood.

The room was furnished with Oriental profusion. Mirrors and pictures adorned the painted walls. Lounges, couches, and settees were scattered about the room. Pots with palms and evergreens filled the corners. In one part of the room a piano occupied a prominent position. The room was lighted up with electricity, each globe shedding different-tinted, delicately-coloured rays of electric light. The silken saloon punkah moved gently forwards and backwards, causing a cool current of Malay Street air to play upon the burning temples of the guests.

A notice on the wall, neatly enclosed in a glass-fronted frame, informed the visitors that none but regular customers were allowed to sign chits (orders).

As everybody signed “chits,” one had to conclude that they were all regular customers.

Some dozen or fifteen women were there—a cosmopolitan lot—every nation being represented excepting British. The British, very properly, deport all British

prostitutes who make Singapore a temporary haven of rest.

At this gathering the first object of all the residents was to get the visitors to shout for drinks. Madame, the proprietress, sounded me and tried to fathom my appreciation of sound wine. She set herself no easy task in endeavouring to induce me to shout. All the girls were on the same wicket. Madame was very intelligent, very civil, and very amusing. She was brimful of wit and whisky. The whisky had an exhilarating effect upon her wit. It moulded, sharpened, and made it stick to you like putty sticks to a pane. But obviously her main interest was in the sale of her refreshments. To shout, or not to shout, for drinks, was the question—the only question. With her chit-book in her hand she was always eagerly waiting to book the next order.

Madame was obviously “made in Germany.”

When three or four fools had shouted Madame became easier in her mind and heavier in her pocket. She sat near to me and chatted. She had been in business in Singapore five or six years and had no complaints to make. She had bought the goodwill of her house for fifteen thousand dollars. The rent was heavy, but the business was good. She was a firm believer in British freedom—which gave her licence to sell grog that was not grog, without restraint. The police were also to her liking. They were not ambitious and had no desire to own terraces of houses, and were quite unlike her own countrymen, who wanted to “own the world and the sun that feeds the world.” The wants of the Singapore police were few and



easily satisfied, therefore she complained not. Only real gentlemen visited her house, she declared. The Chinamen and Malays made her shudder. She enjoyed the protection of a native prince, who was a free giver. She played her best cards at me ; she led her best trumps on me, to buy her wine. I ducked and dodged her importunity. I laughed at her ; chaffing and chatting her in return. At last she said something good. I laughed and said, "Madame, you are keen. You are very keen."

"Yes," she replied, in broken English, "it would cost thee a groaning to take the edge off me, as Hamlet says."

I laughed at this sally. Fancy a brothel-keeper in Singapore quoting from Hamlet ! Meanwhile many other interesting members of "Singapore society " had entered the room until it was fairly filled, and the heat was near suffocating point. The sour smell of scent was nauseating.

A young, good-looking racecourse knave, obviously of the *souteneur* class, with his hair neatly combed and a curled top-knot, was vamping at the piano and biding his time when he might rob a stray guest or two. Out of luck in this respect he would probably rob a girl or beat the woman on whose earnings he lived, since, as I learned afterwards, he had already "done time " in Australia.

A goodly proportion of Singapore residents seemed to be present. The Chinese waiters were kept busy bringing champagne, of a kind, and whiskies and sodas.

The first duty of every girl appeared to be to see that all new-comers shouted, and that the old stagers continued to shout. Their second duty seemed to be to flop into the lap of the fattest old man and try to pick his

pockets. The babble of tongues, the squeaking of voices, the spasmodic rattle of the piano, set up a pandemonium that even New York's Bowery might envy.

Some of the girls were new girls, just imported from Russia. They were speaking Yiddish, and they signalled their advent to Malay Street by dancing, or rather, kicking up obscene antics in the middle of the room.

One big-nosed, dark-eyed, hatchet-faced sample of the Hebrew breed, who could only speak Russian, stood on her head in the room, whilst a sea captain, for diversion, poured champagne over her. It was a sickening, lewd sight, for which the bold "sea-dog" had to pay thirty dollars.

The racecourse "gun," or thief, continued thumping or vamping at the piano, whilst one of the new-comers essayed a song, and Madame sat at the end of the room smiling approvingly at the roaring trade she was doing.

All the money and chits went to her safe keeping.

One young woman, a German, complained to Madame of a bank clerk's rude manners under the influence of wine, to wit, tearing her dress off. Madame said something soothing to the maid, and ordered the bank clerk to "bank his fires and go slow" or he would be put in the street on the quickest notice. So he bought two bottles of wine, and made the girl's heart glad and Madame's pocket heavier.

Madame paid particular attention to a "stout block" of a man, well on the sun-down side of fifty, holding, it was said, a Government job where law, not justice, is

served out to the public, as curry and rice is served out to the natives.

Presently a diversion was created by the arrival of Madame's native protector. His presence appeared to enrage some of the white men.

One of them, half drunk, without his collar and tie, approached. He glared at the black Sultan for a moment, then said, "You are the individual who amuses yourself by slandering white ladies. Take that, you brute!" He threw the contents of a wine-glass and the glass into the Sultan's face. The women screamed, and the men roared, and Madame was on the point of fainting. Instantly pandemonium was let loose.

His dusky Highness turned ash colour with rage. One of the Sultan's "workers" amongst the white women, a so-called bookmaker, who bets on the principle of "heads-I-win-tails-you-lose," tried to bring his clenched fist in collision with the assailant's jaw, but a companion intervened and broke one of Madame's chairs over the head of the Sultan's guttersnipe defender. His dusky Highness then made a rush at him, showing his white teeth like a panting savage. I stopped him. He glared at me, and showed his knowledge of the Western vernacular by asking, "Who the —— I was."

I replied coolly, "I am an Englishman."

"Yes, yes!" rang out a voice from the midst of the throng. "I vas one Dutchman. I stands by the Englishman efery time. You dorg," pointing to his Highness. "Vy come you here? Ve Englishmen and Dutchmen. Ve fun mid de girls. Ve vant no black shpider dis place. You



go in Yava. Ve keeps you in your quarter. Yava you go bed ven de bell rings. Get outside !”

This hoisting of the Dutch flag when the battle was at its highest caused the greatest merriment. Everybody laughed and applauded. The young drunks screeched themselves hoarse. The girls laughed hysterically and took advantage of the confusion to remove the bottles, empty and full, especially the full ones.

Madame, who was now unstable in her gait, ordered me to leave the house. I wished I had never entered it.

“ You no shout, you kick up a row !” (I had never said a word.) “ Get away from my house, away vid you. Vat-a-for you stoppa here ? Go away. You spoila my bizzness, you bada man.”

The crowd now commenced to move off, or go to sleep, or disappear behind curtains or hangings, in a most mysterious fashion. These curtains shut off, I understand, all light from the Chamber of Disease, if not Death. I looked for my friends. They had all vanished, all but one of them. He coolly lighted a cigar and offered to walk home with me. I made a last effort to find the youngster who had so gaily led the way to the den, but no one had heard of him. The Chinese waiters shook their heads and said, “ No savee, no savee.” The girls had disappeared ; the Dutchman was drunk upon the sofa. Several men overcome with drink filled helpless positions about the room. Glasses and bottles and pipes and empty sweet-boxes were scattered around, even the table itself appeared to be drunk. The room was like a wet, torn, and broken piece of scenery. Madame was in tears, apologising to the Sultan. The

Sultan was consoling Madame with a bottle or two of wine.

We sauntered into the street. My companion was quite sober. Like myself, he had been playing the part of observer, not of participant. To him I made a remark about the amount of drink these houses of ill-fame sell at high rates.

“Yes,” he replied. “Without police interference, duty, or authority, they sell and poison as they sell, without let or hindrance. It’s not champagne, it’s a concoction made by the Chinese from fermented rice. The first few bottles they bring in are fairly good. Then they ‘ring in’ the rotten stuff on to you. Sometimes the girls, if they are smart, sell the same bottle three or four times. If the stuff runs short the Chinese barmen in the cellar make up a concoction of brandy, ginger ale, and white spirit. This is bottled up and sold as champagne to men who are already mad with drink. It’s this infamous stuff that does its deadly work of sending the taker to sleep after he has signed the necessary chits and arranged with one of the Yiddish girls to take his boots off.”

The bulk of the trade in these houses is done on the chit system. The individual who is shouting, drinking, and finally sleeping in these dens, signs a chit which is an I.O.U., an order for so much money, drawn on a properly printed order-form book. These are entered up every morning by the Chinese *Krani* (clerk). Bills are then rendered monthly, as butcher’s bills are, and delivered at gentleman’s office or place of business by the regular bill collector, who is instructed to take post-dated cheques,



or even a short-dated promissory note in payment. Some old hands pay fifty to a hundred dollars a month as tribute to Malay Street houses of infamy.

Some of the healthy youngsters, if they are fresh from England and not properly initiated, are let down lighter. All Malay Street bills, however, are generally paid first both by the old sinners or the beginners. The butchers and bakers can wait, but Madame and her maids must be satisfied.

Although I felt mighty mean at being present at this orgie of Malay Street I was glad I had seen and heard and for once assured myself such sights were possible under the Union Jack.

There was a sequel to this visit. Let it speak for itself.

A few days after I chanced to meet the youngster who had so gaily headed our party. He had just been to the doctor, who had ordered him to lay up.

"You young fools will play with the fire," the physician said, "you must expect to get burnt. You must take absolute rest."

"I can't afford to lay up," he had answered.

"You must," the doctor replied.

"I shall lose my billet," he pleaded.

"Can't help it. Your billet is one thing, your health perhaps is quite another. If you don't believe what I say, take a rickshaw and have a look at the Singapore Hospital," said the doctor grimly.

He had limped home from that interview more dead than alive, poor chap! All he said was, "I'll see

the Manager and if he won't help me I'll put my light out."

He saw the Manager. Nothing could be done. An over rush of work had set in. He must do the work he was paid to do, or someone else would be put into his place. If young men would enjoy the debauchery of Malay Street, well, that was their affair, not the Company's.

I saw him again that night. He would eat nothing, and could not sleep. He was in pain, restless, and completely broken up.

Six days after he had been carried to the hospital I visited him on his sick-bed. The hospital is full of young and old, withering steadily, but too surely, away to their last resting-place. It supplies pictures of disease which cannot, for sheer decency, be described. I can only say that the sight I saw was so sickening and repulsively horrible that I was ill for days.

When will the British people open their eyes and look facts fairly in the face? Here is a festering cancer destroying the youth of the East and the West alike, and the very people who should protect and shield the young refuse to deal with it. Parsons preach, priests pray, but few have moral courage to denounce the evil. Why in the name of God Himself don't the mothers of the nation forget all else and take up arms on behalf of the protection of the youths of the nation? If to give women a vote for Parliament will mitigate the evil, for God's dear sake let them have it. Give them Parliament itself if they will only stop the trading and wholesale distribution of the foulest, filthiest disease that ever rankled its deadly poison in the blood of man or

woman. The juice of the cursed hebenon is at the moment imported without let or hindrance in the blood of discarded and outcast females who are banished from their own countries and given gratis to the British in the East.

This poor lad fretted like a sick child, tears came into his eyes when he spoke of his mother, his sisters, and his old father at home. He had lost heart, the blow was so sudden, so terrible to his young, once healthy and vigorous body, that he almost abandoned hope while he lay, hour after hour, in that half-way house to death, silently weeping when the memory of his mother conjured up the days of innocent love, of goodness and of happiness, in the old home where he was born.

He knew that knowledge of his lapse and its punishment would kill his mother and leave a dark shadow of shame upon his own name. Too late he realised that this was the natural result of a minute or two of supposed pleasure—an embrace and the kiss of death, from a strumpet bred in Odessa.

I met the doctor at the door, a good, kind man. He shook his head ominously, saying, "He's thrown up the sponge, he has lost heart and is half dead already. The fearful sights around him have deadened all hope in him. The Company have telegraphed his people that he is 'down with the fever.' This fever story has to 'stand sam' for quite a lot of loathsome diseases. I think he had better be packed off home on board the next boat. It is his only chance. Change of scene, change of climate, and different surroundings may do much. I'll see to it."

I grasped the worthy doctor's hand and thanked him

for the lad's mother's sake. Poor fellow ! Two days after he was sent home. What a shock was in store for his people ! Their fine son returning incapacitated for life, with the dreaded disease of the East in his young blood !



## CHAPTER III

### ÆSTHETIC VICE IN JAPAN

IN the foregoing chapter there has been presented only one phase of the question of prostitution in the East. There is a blacker side to the business, but that has been dealt with fully in the volume, "The White Slave Market," in which, in conjunction with Mrs. Mackirdy, I have done my best to bring home to the hearts and consciences of the white nations the horrors to which the female victims of the Eastern brothels may and frequently are subjected. In this volume it is the danger to and the degradation of the white man by the appeal to his sensuality which I conceive it my duty to make clear. It is quite conceivable that to the majority of men the blatant debauchery of Malay Street would make no appeal. But there are, from the moral point of view, much more insidious appeals to the lower nature to be found in the East and particularly is this the case in regard to Japan, where the whole question of prostitution is so overlaid with false sentimentality and a spurious æstheticism that Eastern morals are easily and almost unconsciously assimilated by the Western neophyte.

In Old Japan the sexes intermixed with the freedom of the feathered occupants of the poultry yard. I remember



once, being on a visit to Japan more than twenty years ago, watching a lot of bathers, men and women, old and young, boys and girls, bathing together with a freedom that would now shock a Western woman, even if she were living under the protection of another woman's husband.

In Old Japan, the regenerate madness was held to be almost as sacred as an act of open faith. To openly molest young girls in the street, on the sands, before the eyes of thousands of spectators was considered as nothing out of the common, but quite in common vogue : it excited just about as much interest in Japan as a child munching a piece of bread and butter in the streets of London would do—the nation was innocent, but entirely natural.

The innocence of the nation knew no shame in doing that in the open, which was natural, and ordained to be done by Nature itself. Yet whilst the Japanese were so free in the intermixing of the sexes as the sparrows in the air, the national horror of disease was very pronounced. A diseased man or woman was looked upon as something to be shunned. The national constitution, the health and vigour of the young, was with the wise rulers the first care of the nation.

The first fruits of that care was fully exemplified in the nation's war with China and the recent war with Russia, when hundreds of thousands of men—not diseased and shrunk shadows of men—were sent into action against the bodily diseased and decrepit Russians, with a result that history now acknowledges.

In Old Japan the authorities had such a moral horror of

venereal disease that the wise rulers of the people established, in all important centres throughout Japan, Government houses, where all who were clean might enter.

These institutions were kept scrupulously clean. So were its woman inhabitants. The tariff charges were set forth in placards upon the wall: so much and so much. Thus the tastes of visitors were regulated by Government charges in a rational fashion.

The money made out of these health establishments was carefully set aside as old age pensions for the women who acted as public harlots under Government control.

The halt and lame, the blind old women, who left the establishments, or were retired to farms and homes to eke out the balance of years allotted to them by Nature were thus pensioned.

Thus the manhood and youth of the country were saved from destruction, from the ravages of insidious diseases, notwithstanding what the weak-minded sentimentalist might say to the contrary.

In these days of old an Englishman visiting a Japanese nobleman would find placed in the visitor's bedroom the host's youngest and prettiest daughter as a convenience.

In the houses of persons having no pretence to nobility, the hospitality the host always extended to his visitors was to place his daughter or maidservant in the bedroom of the visitor on a couch for his greater comforts during the long hours of the night—these acts were considered the acts of high hospitality.

This custom was as common as was or is the custom of the maidservant placing hot-water bottles in the bed

of a visitor to a hospitable English country house in winter.

With all this, what we English would call looseness of morals, the wife of any man, from the poorest of the poor to the richest of the rich, was held sacred to the husband's house and his bed.

Woe, treble woe, betide the "gallant" who seduced another man's wife ! The laws of Nature, the laws of man, were thereby outraged, and the wronged husband could by custom cut the seducer to pieces in the open street, without incurring a penalty.

The land allowed it : the people approved of it. So that no mistake could be made in properly distinguishing a married woman from a single girl, the married woman had several of her front teeth stained with a lasting black dye.

Once the teeth were thus blackened, she was sacred to the husband, and her duty was to serve that husband and increase and multiply the race with healthy legitimate children, who would one day take the place of the father and defend the Empire.

What is the custom in some English countries I could name ?

In those days the hidden secret crimes that rot the mind and damn the souls of so many of the brightest Western youth were unknown in Japan. The non-necessity for these left them unborn in all their awful ugliness, and one involuntarily murmurs that Japanese mothers should thank God for that mercy which is denied the mothers of some highly civilised countries.



In those days of Old Japan, women were cheap—dirty cheap ! Any young Englishman, wishing for a rest cure, or wishing to write a book or study, almost alone, could alight in Japan, engage a small bungalow, furnish it with cheap rattan furniture, and set up a house on his own account. The agent would procure him a girl, housekeeper, cook, wife, etc., all combined.

The worn stranger, looking for peace and quietude, would approach the young girl's mother or father. A brother and a young sister or two would be present ; at such an important function the whole family formally assembled.

The terms of the agreement being settled, a loving parting would take place between the girl and all her relations.

She would be left to her duties in her new home and to obedience to her lord, who wanted rest. She would wash, cook, mend his clothes, darn his socks, prune his nails, and fan him to sleep for hire at so much a month, preferably in advance. She would sprinkle perfume over his distempered body, would nurse him—in fact, play the part of a lone, loving, dutiful spaniel. Every move on his part would be watched : every gesture would be interpreted : every wish anticipated.

If he looked sick, she would nurse, wash and dress him, and watch him to sleep as a baby. With care, soups, delicacies, nursing and perfumed massaging, he would—poor wretched wanderer—regain health. What man could die under such healthful, clean and cheap comforts ?



The opera "Madame Butterfly" is founded upon one of those *pro tem.* wives. Some of these girls never forget their first white lovers : some pine away and wither as does a cut chrysanthemum when he departs. Some bloom under the influence—as does the rosebud under the delightful summer's heat—then perish at the parting, as the flowers do at the cold blast, when summer gives place to winter.

Yet it was the system, good or bad ; a great nation has been built up on it, or whilst it was the system.

The main point, however, in this business system was absence of disease. Of course, a heart was broken now and again : children who could not claim a father came into the world, but all were healthy, all were pure of body as well as mind—let our Western moralists say what they will !

So much for Old Japan. New Japan is certainly getting the hypocrisy of the West in matters natural and national, not to say rational ! But slowly. Even at the time of the last war, the authorities considered the necessity of women going to the front to administer to the comforts of the army.

They were actually sent by Government ; one batch of two hundred being the daughters of very distinguished noblemen—these girls from merely patriotic motives volunteered to go to the front to cheer up the soldiers.

They went, had a patriotic royal time, and returned to their beloved Japan, there to receive the public thanks of their sacred Emperor for their patriotism.

The Japanese standing army are allowed women by

regulation for health's sake. The British are too hypocritical, short-sighted and ignorant to see, meet, and regulate the army's necessities. Time will tell and prove that Lord Nelson was right when he refused to take his crew and ships into a port where no contagious disease Act existed ; and how humane, statesman-like, far-seeing, and patriotic Lord Roberts was when he issued an order to prevent disease becoming rampant in the ranks of the Indian Army !

To-day in Japan, the latest addition to the family of nations, prostitution (there is no need to mince phrases) is not merely regulated, but legalised, licensed, and taxed. Each poor little wretch of a *joro* girl provides, from the price of her prostitution, a contribution towards the building of a Dreadnought, or the braid for the coats of the officers in the Mikado's army.

The plain unvarnished truth of how young girls are sold for this shocking traffic may disturb the sensibility of cleanly living Western men and women ; but it shocks nobody in Japan !

And there are hordes of poor victims—ignorant and sometimes innocent girls—who are on sale under strict Government regulation. The tablets of the tariff charges are on the walls of every house. Indeed, it is one of the sights of Japan—the Peach Garden of the Sea—to witness and hear announcements of fresh young girls, straight from their mothers' homes, being taken into these licensed dens.

The good people in England—the teachers in the Sunday-schools and leaders of choirs—can have but an elementary

knowledge of the manners and customs of Britain's friend and ally in the Far East. Could they but glance at the poor devils of girls of the town exposed for sale, they must change their view as to the possibility of any real alliance between East and West. Yet there is this to be said for the Japanese system if prostitution is to be recognised officially as an institution. I have even heard people argue that it is highly to these wretched girls' credit that they take some of the burden on their shoulders of the ill-feeding and poverty of their homes by selling their bodies. I have heard it said that it is quite on the cards that St. Peter will, on the final judgment-day, pass an entry of credit to their account for selling their bodies to keep mother, brothers, and sisters—and sometimes fathers—alive. In this case they seem to lose sight of the reward due to those who profit by the sacrifice.

Indeed, it is a painful and sickening street sight to see these unfortunate painted children of the night, perfumed, bedecked in fine raiment and false flowers, with cigarettes and sweetmeats by their sides, laughing and chatting in a lively, sensual, and delicate bewilderment, inside the portals of a Government protected brothel. I must use the word ; the truth needs to be known. These girls, as I say, are painted, powdered, and perfumed, and then placed in a long street window, in exactly the same fashion as a butcher places his meat in a street shop window for sale ! There they sit, poor wretches, in the open, like painted dolls in a shop window, for hire to any passer-by who has the dollar to spare.

These girls are not for sale—better for them perhaps if



they were. Go any day to the right quarter of Tokio and you will see the globe trotter standing cheek by jowl with the native at the window, examining the wares offered. There is a pair of English visitors. One likes No. 12. His friend—the innocent young man—thinks No. 9 is “not too bad.” They debate for a moment or two the rival attractions of the stock on view. Finally, one picks No. 7 and the other No. 11. They go to a ticket office in the same manner as you get a ticket at a circus, pay their money to the licensed keeper of the establishment, and No. 7 and No. 11 are called out of the window and disappear through a recess behind. So it goes on. The shop-window population is always shifting, for disease claims its victims, and suicide brings to a premature conclusion many a young life which had not realised what the end of the *joro* really is.

A word here may not be amiss in regard to the *geisha*. She thinks highly of herself, and though in some cases she still remains the entertainer, pure if not simple, in many others she conducts herself much as her licensed sisters. Her reign is short, and the moment her beauty is on the wane and her limbs shrink, she is promptly bundled off to take her chances in the licensed houses.

It was said of old, “Woe to the nation that prostitutes its young.”

Rolland, I think, says, “The gold of the prostitutes is accursed; and curses all that touch it.” Well, if Rolland is an authority, and the ancient adage is true, Japan should have plenty of woe and plenty of curses!

The only saving point, if there be a saving point, in Japan's policy is to be found in the fact that the Govern-



ment regulates the traffic. There may be something to be said for Government protection of the national health, but absolutely nothing can be advanced in favour of official advertisement and encouragement of the traffic. In former days, long before the British Alliance, the girls in the houses of ill-fame were simply slaves. In nine cases out of ten they were ill-used and had no redress. With the awakening of Japan to Western influence a new system was adopted. It seems to act smoothly for the brothel-keepers, and for the Government. Any girl whose inclination sets that way can sign on for a term of five years' joy.

The parties to the contract go before a magistrate, and an agreement is drawn up in the following form :

Name,

Age,

Dwelling-place,

Father's name,

Colour of hair, or any other distinguishing mark,

The agreement proceeds :

“ You, Inkiy Kaukin, being the proprietor of the house known as the ‘ While-you-wait ’ house, a licensed brothel, do hereby agree to take into your house, the said brothel, and to employ for its purposes, for a term of five years from the date hereof, the abovenamed . . . at a price of

300 yen (about £30).

30 yen (about £3) You retain as Mizukin (allow-  
ance for dress).

270 yen (about £27) I, her parent, have received.

“ I guarantee the girl will not be troublesome, and will be faithful in your employment.

“ She is of the . . . . . Sect. . . . . is her temple, being the —H. . . . A. . . . in A.A.A.

“ Signed . . . . . Parent.

Magistrate's name . . . . .

Landlord's name . . . . .

Name of Brothel . . . . .

“ Government Seal.”

An English writer of some note, commenting on one of these certificates, remarked :

“ It seems to me that the certificate was story enough, with its batch of red seals denoting the triple sanction of father, master, and gods. Yet it was better so ! . . . Hard as the fate may be, these were regular sponsors of a legal profession. She was not living ‘ lonely,’ in defiance of public opinion and remorse. She would still be gentle, modest, submissive, until the lapse of time should restore her liberty, unless the rascaldom that would beset her pathway for five long years should coarsen and undo her natural goodness. . . .”

Can any sane man read and believe such rubbish ? After five years in a public brothel in Japan, the prey of anyone who can purchase her, a girl can still be gentle, submissive, and modest !

Government regulation of this profession has, however,

a long history, and this must not be forgotten before condemning the Japanese Government for not at once withdrawing its official sanction to it.

Mr. Booth Chamberlain, in his "Things Japanese," writes :

"When the city of Yedo suddenly rose into splendour at the beginning of the seventeenth century, people of all classes and from all parts of the country flocked thither to try their fortune.

"The courtesans were not behindhand. From Kyoto, from Nara, from Fushimi they arrived, in little parties of three and four.

"But a band of some twenty or thirty from the town of Moto-Yoshiwara, on the Tokaido, were either the most numerous or the most beautiful, and so the district of Yedo, where they took up their abode, came to be called the Yoshiwara.

"At first there was no official supervision of these frail ladies. They were free to ply their trade of lust wherever they chose. But in the year 1617, on the representations of a reformer named Shoshi Jin-emon, the city in general was purified, and all the libertinism in it—permitted, but regulated—was banished to one special quarter near Nihon-bashi, to which the name of Yoshiwara attached itself.

"Later on, in A.D. 1656, when the city had grown larger, and Nihon-bashi had become its centre, the authorities caused the houses in question to be removed to their present site on the northern limit of Yedo, whence the

name of Shin (i.e. New) Yoshiwara, by which the place is currently known.

“Foreigners often speak of a ‘Yoshiwara’ as if the word were a generic term. It is not so. The quarters of a similar character in the other cities of Japan are never so-called by the Japanese themselves.

“Such words as *yujoba* and *kuruwa* are used to designate them.

“Japanese literature is full of romantic stories in which brotheldom plays a part. Generally the heroine has found her way there in obedience to the dictates of filial piety, in order to support her aged parents, or else she is kidnapped by some ruffian, who basely sells her for his own profit.

“The story often ends by the girl emerging from a life of shame with at least her heart *apparently* untainted, and by all the good people living happily ever after on the coin she made. It is to be feared that real life witnesses but few such fortunate cases, though it is probably true that the fallen women of Japan are, as a class, less vicious than their representatives in Western lands, less drunken, less foul-mouthed, and last longer.

“On the other hand, a Japanese proverb says that a ‘truthful courtesan is as great a miracle as a square egg.’ In former times, girls could be, and were, regularly and legally sold into debauchery at the Yoshiwara in Yedo, and its counterparts throughout the land, a state of things which the present Government has hastened to reform.

“When we add that a weekly medical inspection of



the inmates of all such places was introduced in 1874, that each house and each separate inmate is heavily taxed, and that there is severe police control over all, and that since 1888 the idea has been mooted of doing away with licensed prostitution altogether—a plan eagerly advocated by zealous Christian neophytes, but frowned on by the doctors—we have mentioned all that need here be said on a subject which could only be fully discussed in the pages of a medical work.”

To show the matter-of-fact way the Japanese themselves regard the question of prostitution, I have only to quote from a curious guide-book printed in English, Japanese, and Chinese, entitled, “Pictorial Description of the Famous Places in Tokyo.” The English version by Mr. G. Takahashi is naive in the extreme. He writes, for instance, of the Tari-No-Matsuri, a name given to a festival which will not bear translation, bearing testimony to the strength of its position among the people :

“In Yoshiwara, in the first month of autumn, the Feast of Lanterns is celebrated yearly. The origin of the festival is ascribed to the untimely death of a flourishing harlot, by the name of Tamagiku, in a former time.

“As she died rather suddenly in the midst of her prosperity, the whole quarter wherein she dwelt while living lamented over the loss of her, and every house hanged out a lantern, upon which a kind of elegy was written for her in order to console the dead spirit of her.

“This being the origin of the celebration, it has now

lost the mournful nature entirely, and taken a licentious character, and is celebrated yearly to attract visitors."

He looks upon the houses of ill-fame as particularly worth calling attention to, as witness his description of Shinagawa-Ro in the Yoshiwara :

"Among the prostitute quarters in and near Tokyo, Yoshiwara is the most noted and prosperous. It contains about a hundred brothels" . . . (hundreds *now*) . . . "of several degrees, among which there are five grand brothels, one of which is called the Shinagawa-Ro. Those brothels have recently emulated each other in building new houses : and this Shinagawa-Ro is the first, both in the date of building and the beauty of its architecture. The house is three-storied and excellently well furnished, many strange and precious woods being used in the fixings.

"It is said that this brothel differs from all others in the treatment of its visitors, and acts in a quite independent manner in some respects also."

Biographies of some of the most eminent persons in Tokyo are included, among them that of Shizunami ("Calm Sea"), a harlot in the Daimonji of the Yedo ward in Yoshiwara :

"Her father was a samurai, belonging to the Tokugawa Shogunate, and in the time of the Revolution fought the famous battle upon the Ueno hill for his lord. But as his party was defeated, he fled into Shizuoka, where the last Shogun is now residing : and passing some time there, he returned to Tokyo after the Restoration.

Then he became a merchant and opened a shop in Hongo, but his want of experience soon made him bankrupt. This sad event was followed by a severe disease. He was now quite unable to support his family.

“At this time, seeing her family suffer from poverty, the poor Shizunami, his daughter—then still young—was greatly troubled, and determining to sacrifice herself for the good of her family, went to Yoshiwara, to do the profession of a harlot. How was it that such a woman of filial piety as she should have been so unfortunate as to become a harlot? She is very beautiful: two crescent moons represent her eyebrows, while two bright stars shine under them. She is loved by all those who visit her on account of her tenderness and sincerity. She never forgets her parents, always doing them good.”

“Murasaki of the Rozen-Ro” is another of Mr. Takahashi’s notables.

“Murasaki is a harlot in the Rozen-Ro, one of the five great brothels in Yoshiwara. She was born in Yokohama: her mother and brother treated her cruelly, though she was very obedient: and pressed by poverty, they sold her to become a harlot.

“She does not learn to practise the harlotry of art, her behaviour is simple, and like that of a daughter of good family. The writer of ‘Azuma Shinshi,’ a periodical magazine, once wrote a brief sketch of her biography in his paper.

“After that, one of her visitors spoke to her of what was said in that magazine, and asked her whether she was



really so unfortunate as that : to which question she replied thus : ‘ I do not say that it is all false, but I think it is very deplorable that such a thing has ever been written, for it has brought the cruelty of my dear mother and brother into light.’

“ In fact she defiled her body but not her heart : so that it was with justice that she was once described by the same writer as a ‘ lotus in the mud,’ which gives a pure and elegant flower, undefiled by the mud.”

Mr. Takahashi seems to gauge the prosperity of a place by the number of its houses of ill-fame.

He describes Shinagawa thus, for instance :

“ The town of Shinagawa stands on the high shore of the Tokyo Bay, almost adjoining the city of Tokyo. As the position is very high, it has a commanding view.

“ Formerly the town was very prosperous, and brothels and prostitutes of all degrees, as well as various restaurants, stood in rows, every one of which was always full, both day and night.

“ In prosperity it rivalled with Yoshiwara then. But after the recent Revolution it has undergone a total change—change, it might be said, for the better ; still it possesses some sixty or seventy brothel-houses and seven or eight hundred prostitutes. Thus in prosperity it stands below Yoshiwara and Nezu, but in scenery it surpasses these and many others, because Nature does not change as the works of men do.

“ Yanagibashi has for a long time been the first *geisha* quarter (quarter where singing-girls keep their houses) in



Yedo ; but after the Restoration a like quarter at Shinbashi got the ascendancy, and the former is now almost unable to compete with the latter. But judging from the preservation of the true old characteristics of that profession, Yanagibashi stands several degrees above Shinbashi. Nor is this all. As to the restaurants, the former almost eclipses the latter by its grand and fine buildings standing on the edge of the beautiful stream of the Sumida, which gives to them incomparable grace and elegance. As for the love affairs so common there, there are among them many worthy of relating, but as they have already been described by able pens, we will not mention any here."

It must be remembered that these quotations did not come from a book written upon the Yoshiwara, but they constitute about one-half the letterpress of an illustrated guide-book to the most celebrated places and personages of Tokio. The fact that it is printed in English would suggest that Englishmen who have got as far East as Japan have assimilated Eastern morals without much difficulty.

"The social evil," says Mr. Delmar, in dealing with this subject, "does not force itself upon the notice of travellers in Japan as it does upon travellers to European cities, and it is not surprising that many ladies have formed the opinion that the immorality of the Japanese has been grossly exaggerated. Most European men who go to Tokyo are familiar with the Yoshiwara, and some European ladies have been to see it.

“ An hour’s drive from the hotel brings you to its gates, and a couple of hours’ stroll through its crowded streets will suffice to gather a clear idea of the externals of this peculiar institution. With the exception of a few of the best *joroya*, where the public exhibition of the inmates has been abandoned, each house has a shop-window—*à la* some butcher’s shop—similar to those of the great shops in European cities. The side open to the street has perpendicular bars of iron or wood about six inches apart, and in a few the spaces between the bars are filled with panes of glass.

“ At the back is a screen, varying in splendour according to the means of the house, but generally blazing with gilt, and sometimes made of valuable gold lacquer.

“ In front of the screen the inmates sit or kneel on little cushions, with tiny lacquer tables before them, engaged generally in smoking, but at times applying a finishing touch to the lavish make-up with which their faces are covered. As far as can be seen through this mask of cosmetics some few of these girls are rather pretty, but the majority are simply plain, if not ugly.

“ In the better class of houses the costumes of the *joro* are of a richness and brilliancy seen nowhere else in Japan except at the theatres, and strongly contrasting with the dull neutral tints seen elsewhere. In this gorgeous array they sit absorbed in their trivial occupations, with apparent indifference to the inspections of the passers-by, or as to whether a favourable eye will rest on one of them, and lead to her being called from the show-window to the interior.

“ In the more democratic houses, the girls will throng to

the front, solicit the promenaders, and indulge in coarse jests and ribald conversation with them. Although one sees children brought as visitors to the Yoshiwara, and it is said to be a ' favourite promenade ' for respectable women, I doubt if decent Japanese women come very often, as the *joro* suspect such as do come there to be looking for missing husbands or lovers : and they are apt to show their resentment, for what they imagine may be unlicensed and unfair competition, by shouting insulting remarks.

“ Nor will these remarks necessarily be in Japanese, for some of the *joro* have a sufficient smattering of a European tongue, usually English, and those who have the greatest command of the language may astonish you with the information they picked up at the missionary school.

“ If some of the lady missionaries, whose efforts have been directed to teaching English to Japanese girls of the poorer classes would interview the English-speaking inmates of the Yoshiwara of Tokyo, and the *cho* of other big cities, they would either discover many scholars from the missionary schools, or would find out why the *joro* represent themselves as having received instruction there.

“ There is no reflection on the missionaries, as it is impossible for them to fathom the reasons which may induce the sending of a girl to their schools ; but similar results followed the founding of a girls' school in Siam, where, owing to habits of cleanliness taught by Europeans, and the consequent freedom from certain diseases, they were eagerly sought for by rich men as mistresses. One *joro*, living in Yokohama under a three-years' agreement, told me she had learned at the same school where she acquired



English, of the better treatment of women in Europe, and the superior position they occupy in their relations with men, so that her ambition was not to marry a rich Japanese but to become the mistress of a rich European."

The *joro*, who is no longer in law a slave, is the one whose earnings are a source of profit to the licensing authorities. What these earnings are, may be judged by the established tariff of the various houses (*joroya*) in the fashionable Shin-Yoshiwara of Tokio.

This ranges from thirty sen ( $7\frac{1}{2}$ d.), in the poorer *joroya*, to three yen (6s.) in the best ones. Half the *joro*'s earnings go for board, i.e. the brothel-keeper gets half each girl gets from each man. Then 15 per cent is deducted towards paying off the loan to her father, husband, or guardian, for which she is the pledge; 7 per cent is estimated for taxes; and out of the remaining 28 per cent expensive clothes and various luxuries must be bought.

In the old days the girls were sold outright at a tender age to be brought up to their "profession." In 1872 they were emancipated, and a system of mortgaging them instituted, which accomplishes the same ends as the previous slavery. Until the debt is paid, they may never leave the prostitute quarters. A death or other important family event may procure a few days' leave from the house. An unsatisfactory report from the doctor by whom she is examined weekly at the police station may—but often does not—lead to her seclusion in the Lock Hospital. Serious illness of any kind may cause her to be sent to the general hospital. But with these exceptions nothing but money or death can secure her release.



Some few are freed by rich lovers ; some manage to save enough from the rapacity of the brothel-keepers to free themselves, but more obtain release by suicide, which most frequently takes the form of *joshi* or *shinju*, the double suicide of the *joro*, and the financially ruined lover.

The keepers are bound by most stringent regulations, most of which however they habitually transgress. They must not solicit passers-by, but many do so nightly. They must not tip jinricksha men, but most do. They must not advertise, but their cards are to be found in the sitting-rooms of all the leading hotels.

The laws protecting the *joro* are equally violated or evaded, and they are cheated and swindled without end. The minimum age at which girls are licensed as *joro* is fixed at fifteen years, an age which is certainly not adhered to. Many of the girls are eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years old. The keepers' profits are enlarged in another direction, by sale of food, drink, and tobacco to the clients : and each client is expected to spend on these luxuries and on tips to servants at least twice as much as goes to the *joro*.

In the *joroya* frequented by Europeans an additional charge is made for a room furnished in European style, and the tariff for the same *joro* who may be visited in a Japanese room for three yen might be, if seen in the European room, ten.

The great objection to this system of State regulation of prostitution is that it does not seem in any way to diminish the number outside its scope, except in the street-walking

class. It is true that there are laws against *secret* prostitution and trivial penalties for their infringement; but almost every district has its local name for secret prostitutes, ranging from *goke* (windows) and *kusa-mochi* (rice-bread) to *jigoku-onna* (hell-woman), and almost every inn has its *meshi-mori*, who are prostitutes as well as servants.

The secrecy only means that they are unlicensed, and so escape taxation. In other respects, there is not only no secrecy but no concealment, and nothing surreptitious.

“To their credit, or discredit, be it said,” says Mr. Osman Edwards, “none of my Tokyo friends cared to visit the Shin-Yoshiwara in the company of an alien. They were not exactly hindered by *moral* scruples, but rather by a disinclination to disclose the seamy side of their fellow-countrymen to censorious eyes. They professed ignorance, and changed the subject to railways or iron-clads.

“However, one evening, I met by chance the secretary of a famous lawyer politician who was taking a country cousin to see the sights of the capital: and as he obligingly invited me to join the party, we made our way together through the maze of variety shows and toy-shops which surround the Temple of Kwannon at Asakusa, until we reached the high embankment of Nihontsutsumi.

“We traversed Gojikken-machi, the street of fifty tea-houses, leading to the ponderous gate, where two dapper policemen, neatly gloved and sworded, kept watch and ward. Now we are between handsome edifices, four stories high, adorned with balconies and electric light, in the broad central Naka-no-cho, which three narrow buildings

intersect on either side, containing shops of less imposing dimensions. The upper stories tell no tales, though their paper-panelled shutters give twinkling and tinkling signs of revelry. On the ground-floor is an unbroken series of shop-windows, not fronted with plate glass as in Piccadilly, nor open to the street as in the Ginza, but palisaded with wooden bars from three to seven inches wide. And behind the bars, on silk or velvet cushions, against a gaudy background of draped mirrors and ornamental woodwork, sit the wares—a row of powdered, painted, exquisitely upholstered victims.

“Most of them look happy enough as they chatter or smoke, or run laughing to the barrier to greet a passing acquaintance, but I know what heroic endurance is masked by a Japanese smile, and the sight of caged women turns me sick.

“Then I reflect that Western sentiment, however justified, by inherited ethics, is scarcely the best auxiliary of fair judgment: so striving to convert my conscience to a camera, I follow my companions through the strange avenue of animated dolls. It was easy to believe that the inmates of the best houses were socially superior to the rest; for those I saw had gentle, refined faces, and did not raise their eyes from book or embroidery.

“The least expensive dolls’ houses—they were of four grades—were decorated in execrable taste, and the Circes who cried or beckoned from their red-and-gilt dens had harsh voices and were of ungainly build. But between these extremes were some groups of prettily dressed exhibits, whose rich yet sober colouring harmonised admir-



ably with the vision of whatever artist had been invited to decorate their showroom.

“ There was the House of the Well of the Long Blooming Flowers, which should have been isolated, for sheer loveliness, from its flaunting neighbours. Behind the motionless houri, whose bright black tresses and mauve kimono were starred with white flowers, ran a riot of branch and blossoms on walls and screens. Had Mohammed been Japanese, here was a tableau to win believers with the lure of a sensual paradise, but for the fact that, having realised so material a heaven on earth, the most inquisitive nation in the world would have demanded less familiar felicity. We have been tramping and gazing for more than an hour at nearly two thousand replicas of the same figure, watching its movements and conjecturing its feelings. The cages were beginning to empty, as the more attractive centrepieces found purchasers. I detected a certain impatience in my companion’s bearing, and I was on the point of taking leave of them, when the secretary suggested that if I would like to enter the Dragonhouse and take notes of the interior, he would explain my mission to the proprietor.

“ It was needful to release three damsels from the public gaze if we would enter, and this we cheerfully did, bidding Young Bamboo, Golden Harp, and River of Song escape to their chambers. Then, leaving our shoes in charge of bowing attendants, we climbed to the first floor, and began the evening with a mild tea-party.

“ The *shinzo*, in black dresses, brought in lacquer trays, on which were scarlet bowls containing eggs, fish,



and other delicacies. *Sake* flowed more copiously than tea.

“ I was sorry to hear that the old-time processions were falling into disuse, and though not yet abandoned entirely were losing their ancient splendour. The *taiyu*, too, was a thing of the past. The aureole of combs, the manifold robe over robe, the child-attendants, had all gone.

“ Varying now only in costume and accomplishment, all the women alike were cage-dwellers, whereas in former days, the superior classes of them were spared that indignity. So far from evading questions, the presiding representative of Spearhand, an elderly woman, with a not unkindly face, seemed amused by my interest, and answered readily. I began to think we had made a mistake. This decorous tea-party, removed from the glare and bustle of the street, bore little resemblance to an orgy.

“ A sound of thrumming from the floor above hinted that the next item on the programme was to be musical. We mounted and found ourselves in the presence of two *geisha*, Miss Wisteria and Miss Dolly, who had been summoned by my cicerone while I was interrogating the *shinzo*. The status and performance of these *geisha* differ considerably from those of their more respectable sisters, and Europeans, by confusing the two, have no doubt helped to fix a stigma to the whole class. Miss Dolly was no more than a child, and Miss Wisteria was about sixteen. Both songs and dances without being vulgar, were decidedly lax: and as the songs were topical, I followed them less easily than the dance, which might have been named—after a primitive Japanese goddess—‘ The

Female who Invites.' Yet I must confess that indelicacy was not blatant, but redeemed by a coy conscientiousness, as of one who, half laughing, half shrinking, complied with an inevitable command.

"At this moment, Young Bamboo, Golden Harp, and River of Song, whom I had completely forgotten, reappeared on the scene. They had changed their scarlet robes for looser ones of white satin, and awaited our pleasure. I explained to River of Song, whose intelligent expression had influenced my choice, that if she would tell me her story and describe her impressions of Yoshiwara life, her duties would be at an end and her fees doubled.

"Entering readily into the rôle of Scheherazade, she began by declaring that, though eagerly awaiting the day of liberation, which was yet two years off, she was not so unhappy as many of her companions. At first, when the bell rang before the shrine every evening for a signal to enter the cage (*mise*, the shop, she called it), the ordeal was long and painful. But time had assuaged this feeling, and she had made many friends. Moreover, the Spearhand of Dragon Cape had taken a fancy to her, and made her life easier. Then she recalled her childhood.

"Her real name was Miss Mushroom (*Matsutake*), and her father was a fisherman of Shinagawa. Ever since she could remember, it had been her habit to patter barefooted and gather shellfish along the beach at low tide. But bad times drove her parents into Tokyo, where an uncle had a small shop in the main street of Asakusa. On him they built their hopes, but his business failed, her mother died; and at last the father, hoping to make a fresh start by

capitalising his daughter, sold her to the house of Dragon Cape. At this point I asked if I could see the *nenki-shomon*, or certificate of sale, which would probably be in the possession of Spearhand. River of Song hesitated, not liking to ask, but I volunteered to accompany her, and we finished the story in the actual sanctum of Spearhand, whom I had propitiated with coins and cigarettes.”

## CHAPTER IV

### TANGLES AND TRAGEDIES

THE preceding two chapters deal with a phase of life in regard to which some of my readers may perhaps remark that there is nothing intrinsically Eastern about its morality—or lack of it. That would be perfectly just criticism, but for the fact that it is only in the East that prostitution, if not fostered, is at least condoned not only under the Japanese but also under the British flag, and being so, its appeal to the new-comer is much more insistent than in the cities of the West. It follows, too, as a matter of course, that to the ordinary clean-living young Englishman what seems the only alternative offered him of providing himself with a native wife should seem by comparison the dictation of morality as well as of prudence. There is much to be said in favour of this contention and I shall return to it later, but the outcome of such irregular alliances almost invariably result in unhappiness to one, if not both, of the parties to them. Sometimes the result is actual tragedy, and there are few, if any, cities in the East where, without much asking, a story of the fatal results of an alliance between the man of the West and the woman of the East is not to be obtained.

One such story particularly impressed me when I heard



it, not two years ago. I was seated in a comfortable chair in a Penang club, with the punkahs playing a cool breeze on my temples, and keeping at bay the sandflies and poisonous mosquitoes. I was feeling at peace with myself. I had had a good dinner, and the process of digestion, assisted by a liqueur and a good Dutch cigar, was gently taking place. It was a beautiful Eastern night, a glorious sky, a moonlit firmament, that enchanted the senses. The after-dinner drowsiness held me captive. I dozed in a day-dream, half awake, half asleep.

I accordingly hardly felt grateful to a disturber of my repose who plumped himself into a chair opposite me and with frank colonial hospitality at once ordered refreshments for two. But it was not long before I changed my opinion. My *vis-à-vis* was a well-set-up man, past middle age, with a conversational charm and a jovial open-handed good nature which would have served him as a passport to any part of the world. I am not going to give his name. He might not be too grateful if I did. Suffice it to say that he knew the East thoroughly, and when we fell to discussing the relationships between the sexes he had no hesitation in drawing upon the storehouse of his experience to illustrate his theories. I forget how the conversation began, but I remember distinctly that I ultimately put to him point-blank the question whether every man in the East lives in concubinage with a native woman.

He was serious for a moment, then he replied :

“ No. Every man does not live so in the East. Some men abhor their dark sisters, others love them, some so

much that they keep two or three. Some white men even desert their white wives for the coloured girls, but they generally do the thing decently. They send the white woman home to their people and when they go out at the front door the coloured women enter at the back. Really, the white women soon get 'fed up' with the life of the East and positively want to go home. On the other hand, white men soon tire of white women, and gladly help them to go, and stop when they get there, so, both parties being satisfied, all swims smoothly! This sounds cynical, perhaps. But we are in the East, not the West, and the East is cynical. If you want to know my opinion of it, I should tell you that everything which seems true is false, but that the reverse does not hold good. So the capacity for recognising the false from the true becomes atrophied through lack of material with which to contrast them. I don't suppose you will meet many white men who have not at some period of their life in the East had a coloured lady presiding over his *ménage*. I do not see why anyone should blame them if they do, but somehow the unanimity with which white men start the mixed *ménage* would lead one to imagine sometimes that their principal mission in the East is to bastardise the land. You see, this is a problem which no one has fairly faced. It is put down as a local problem of the East—Western men will not undertake to solve it.

“ Their policy seems to be, ‘ Let things slide ! ’ and they do slide to some purpose. I often think that the native men must imagine that the white man coming from the West seems to have one solid, sordid, silent mission in the

East, and that is to bastardise the ‘copper-coloured’ races. If in this occupation my own countrymen are most successful, they are not to blame. They are men after all, and as the other parties to the contracts—the coloured women—offer no objection, but every facility, the result is inevitable. Speaking generally, no great harm is done save to the unfortunate children whose white blood carries a distinction which is worse than a slur and leaves them children of no nation.

“Some, however, of these concubinage unions have had tragic results. Don’t think because the women are black, meek, and don’t say ‘No’ to the white man, that they are dear little innocent beings. Nothing of the sort. Some of them are she-devils, and after a time, a short time, they rule their white lords with rods of iron!

“I have known white men infernally afraid of the Malay women. They are devils, and if they once get jealous of you they set out for your blood. A Malay woman would wait on you for years to be revenged. Of course, in the majority of cases the relationship is looked upon by the ‘wife’ as a business contract, but cases do occur in which the Malay woman loves her white lord. Then he must look out for squalls. Did you ever hear of that case called the ‘Tragedy of Penang’?”

I told him that I had not, and eventually he told me the following story :

“Young —— was a fine fellow, manly and straight, good-tempered and jolly, well educated and well connected, had heaps of friends, a good job, and a cast-iron constitution.



“He was secretary of the ——. Everyone liked him ; girls ‘loved’ him ; he was free with his money, had a nice little bungalow, and contemplated marriage when he could afford it. Meanwhile, following the custom, he placed at the head of his establishment a comely Malay maiden. She made an excellent housekeeper, and soon could be trusted to look after domestic matters with every confidence.

“One child was soon born to this unauthorised union, an incident which considerably worried poor — and led him to postpone his marriage with the white girl in England, who was much in love with him. He had got right into the rut and every day his Malay wife got a stronger hold over him. People began to talk and sneer and to speculate as to how he would manage to dissolve the connection. His friends backed the Malay girl every time to win. Then another child was born to them, and two half-bred Malay children prattled around the bungalow and made mud pies in the road beyond the gates. The white girl’s friends now intervened, the man promised to get rid of the Malay woman, marry, and settle down in some sort of respectability. Eventually he screwed up his courage to make a definite move. What happened between the Malay woman and him we will never know, but she left the bungalow with his children and to all appearance she had disappeared for ever.

“Our friend now set his house in order to get married to the white girl of his heart, and his leave being due booked his passage. He went on to the outgoing steamer with the happiest anticipations. He had received a



rousing send-off at the Club, so he was on thorough good terms with himself when he boarded the boat.

“There he got a shock. A confidential whisper from the steward informed him that a woman had brought some of his clothes and insisted upon waiting his arrival. He at once thought of the Malay ‘wife.’ He went to his cabin and found that his anticipation had been correct. She was waiting there for him, and rose on his entrance with a smile. He stepped back a pace, but she came on with outstretched arms. She shut the cabin door with a bang. The next moment she had her arms about him. She clung to him as a tigress clings to her cub. Her frame quivered with excitement. What was he to do? Time was limited. He had to get rid of her, and there was only one way by which he could pacify her, and that was by telling her that he had no intention of casting her off. She knew why he was leaving, she knew that he was not coming back alone, and she eventually wrung from him a promise that she should live in the house as his servant.

“His thoughts could not have been enviable, but he was of an optimistic temperament and probably imagined that if on his return the mother of his two children had not found a native spouse he could arrange matters with a hundred or two rupees. Women being cheap, two hundred rupees goes a long way towards appeasing the wounded feelings of the deserted mother.

“So he sailed off, and was married in England with all the usual flowers, and speeches, and blessing of the Church, and in due course returned to Penang.

“The first person he met on the wharf was the Malay

woman—the mother of his children. She was decked out in her best, looked happy, smiled graciously, ‘kow-towed’ to the young bride, handing her presents of flowers, fruits, and so on, and wishing her joy and happiness in the Malay tongue. With a smile, she offered her services as servant to the ‘mem-sahib’ telling her that she had been left in charge of the bungalow, and that she hoped she would not be dismissed.

“There was nobody to warn the bride. Her husband dared not. Even if the remembrance of his promise had not swayed him he could not face the exposure which would have awaited him had he urged any objection to the proposal. The newly made bride, in the bloom of youth, living at the time in the garden of womanly happiness, her honeymoon, was delighted at the prospect of being served by such a fine, bright, handsome-faced Malay girl. Her husband had misgivings as to the future, but his mouth was sealed.

“The party went to their new home. All went on well for some few months—it might have been four or five, perhaps more. Then it was whispered abroad that the young wife was in an interesting condition. Some of the men laughed; they thought the situation of two wives and two families in the same bungalow had the makings of a French farce in it. It was about this time that the dual husband took me into his confidence. I met him here at the Club. We sat in that far corner and near the window yonder which looks out on to the ocean. Poor chap, he was ill, visibly so! He looked very downhearted. I tried to cheer him up.

“ We had a whisky or two. ‘ Tell me, what’s amiss,’ I asked ; ‘ if I can be of any service to you, tell me now.’ ”

“ He shook me by the hand, his nerves were very shaky, and I remember how his fingers trembled, and then he told the trouble. His wife was ‘ expecting.’ It was not surprising that between the white and black occupants of his bungalow his life was like one of the damned. He had not the courage to turn out the Malay woman. He had tried to persuade her to go away, but she had refused. He could not insist without exposure. Meanwhile the slightest extra attention he paid to his white wife enraged his coloured spouse, who was becoming a devil incarnate. He had tried to break off the intercourse with her, but it was too late. She would not let him go. She had learned her strength and had insisted upon her share of marital favours. She watched, waited, and planted herself in corners to surprise and detain him.

“ His white wife had also become suspicious and watched the pair. Perhaps if her condition had not influenced her she might have averted the coming tragedy by leaving her husband, for the Malay woman had grown bold, impertinent, and gave but indifferent service. After all, she had some warrant for her attitude, doubtless she considered she had a prior claim to that of the white wife. You can easily imagine that between the two existence to the man must have been something like hell itself. What could I advise in a case like this ? What could anyone advise but the course which everyone had already recommended and which the Malay wife’s refusal to be a party rendered impossible to be taken. However, I urged him to be a man



and clear the Malay out at all costs. He promised to try, but obviously from his manner he had little hope that he would succeed.

“Later I met him at Penang races and asked him whether he had done anything. He seemed more cheerful than on the last occasion, and he smiled—though his smile was of the sickly order—as he told me that he had succeeded in inducing the Malay woman to make her exit. He had provided for her an establishment outside the town and had promised to see her twice weekly. Then, not altogether to my surprise, he broke out into a vehement denunciation of her and his own folly in having ever allowed her to get the upper hand.

“We were speaking below the grand stand near the fountain amongst the bushes, just near the mile and a distance post. I thought I heard the bushes rustle. I stopped the conversation and looked amongst the bushes. Sure enough, secreted and listening to our talk was a burly Malay. I approached and questioned him, but he smiled and told me that he knew no English.

“My friend shook his head. He was quite convinced that the man had been engaged by his black wife to shadow him. I was inclined to agree with him and from all appearances I judged that here was a man who was in deep water and pretty hot water too.

“Some weeks passed. Then I met the family *medico* in the street. I knew him well enough to ask after the white wife. He looked grave, and did not answer at first. Then he remarked, ‘ You know she is ill ? ’

“ ‘ Well,’ I replied, ‘ I know she is expecting to be laid

up, and the rest of Penang must be pretty well posted by this time.'

" 'There's more than that,' replied the doctor, 'and for the life of me I cannot diagnose the case. For the last three weeks the poor lady has simply been wasting away. It is a strange case. Nothing seems to relieve her. She is just wasting—wasting—and getting weaker day by day, from no apparent cause. Her husband is simply wild.'

" 'Has he told you of the trouble he has had with the native "wife"?' I asked quietly.

"The doctor whistled and his face grew graver. 'So that is it,' he remarked. 'No, I hadn't that complication in view.'

"The suspicion which had sprung up instantly in my mind had been speedily transferred to his. We both knew something of the Peninsula, you see.

" 'What do you know?' he asked.

"I told him all that I had heard from my friend, for when life is at stake one doesn't boggle at breaking a confidence. He made no remark. We were walking along and had arrived at the Club. His motor-car was at the door. I turned to bid him good-bye. 'Get in,' he said, 'I may want you.'

"I obeyed, and we drove off. The evening breeze from the sea had just commenced to bring its daily relief to the sweltering city of Penang. We went straight to ——'s bungalow as fast as the car could take us.

"When we reached our destination the doors and windows were all thrown open to admit the breeze. A

loud voice came from the sick chamber, and we hurried on. I think the one thought struck us both that we were not too late.

“The doctor knew his way and went straight to the bedroom where the young wife lay. I followed close on his heels. My hope took to flight at the scene we encountered. The young white wife lay huddled up on the bed, her wavering eyes already glassing over at the approach of death. Beside her, two young Malay half-caste children were seated, whining in a top note. At the foot of the bedstead, supporting herself with a tight grasp upon the top rail, stood the Malay woman. It was her voice we had heard—her voice raised in triumph-exclamation over a broken rival.

“‘These are his children, and mine,’ she shrieked again and again. ‘No child of his will you ever bear to him.’ There was much else, but that was in her native tongue and, living or dying, to the unfortunate woman it would have been equally incomprehensible. But her husband knew, and he, poor devil, was on his knees by the bedside, broken in mind, will, and body by the breaking upon him of the tornado he had raised.

“To the native wife our coming did but set the final crown upon her triumph, and incidentally she related how she had been administering what she called the ‘drug of death.’

“Between us we managed to get her out of the sick-room. She spat, cursed, and tried to bite us. The children’s wild cries intensified the horror of the scene. We dragged and carried her down the back steps, out along the verandah,



then into the back kitchen away at the back of the bungalow. She fought like a tigress. We were at our wits' end to devise a means for keeping her there when the report of a pistol brought the struggle to an end. The Malay's face suddenly became tense. She ceased her struggle. We loosed our hold of her, and turning, the doctor and I rushed back to the room we had so lately left. The scent of powder was in the air and—well, we found two corpses there instead of one.

“My friend, the *medico*, went to the bed. He glanced at the man, then at the woman. One glance was enough. At that moment the cause of the tragedy entered the room. She was apparently tranquil. She boldly passed the doctor and myself, kissed her dead lover's lips, did not cast a glance at her dead rival, and glided away.

“The doctor and I stared vacantly at each other. Even to a medical man such an experience was nerve-shattering, and as for me—my hands were shaking. But even now we were not through. A cry from the kitchen. A child's voice, half shriek, half wail, dying away into a moan. While we listened there was a jabber of voices, a patter of feet and voices calling us to come. We went, and there the final scene in the tragedy was shown. The two children and the mother lay there stabbed to the heart with one of those long keen-bladed knives—the kris.

“No,” he moralised. “The white man who strays in the country is only asking for trouble when he brings a new wife to the home where the old one has not resigned. It would be the same in the old country if bigamy were permitted. Ninety-nine out of a hundred would perhaps

take things quietly, but the hundredth would end in trouble and tragedy.

“The end of the story? If you want the actual finish you will find it written out there in the Penang cemetery, where the wild creepers are already covering the grave where the unfortunate pair are locked in the peaceful embrace denied them in life.

“After all,” he continued, “I do not know that her lot was not preferable to that of another unfortunate woman who came out here as a bride and whom I chanced to meet once quite casually. In this case the husband was a planter, no matter in what state, and he had lived here for many years. He had come to the East when quite a young man and lived a rackety life amongst all classes and sorts of women—Chinese, Malay, Javanese, Japanese, in turn had presided over his bungalow, and he had not made the mistake of the other man I told you about of letting any one of them get the upper hand. For one thing, he was a Scotsman with a thick square jaw of sensuality. He had an estate, small to be sure, still from it he derived a good income. It is said he had as many ‘copper-coloured’ youngsters kicking about as trees on the estate. But he acknowledged no responsibility in regard to any of them.

“Well, when age commenced to set in and his blood cooled with the beginning of the afternoon of life, I presume this canny Scot must have gazed back upon his black past, wasted upon the wilderness of sensuality, and realised how all his manhood had been lost upon the desert air. Perhaps the prospect of going to his grave unmourned, unsung, without a white wife or white child to drop a tear on the

earth that protected his bones from the vultures of the jungle appalled him. Money he had, but health and reputation had been lost, and he may have had a passing hope that it was not too late to rehabilitate the latter if not the former. Like many another when beset with age and impotence, he desired to become respectable and live in the eyes of our society as a decent white man, to shed the morality of the East and become a kirk-going Scot, like his forbears. To this end he sent to Scotland for a spinster cousin, who was far from being in the bloom of maidenhood. She came to the wilderness, married him, and lived a 'Jack-and-Jill' sort of life for a year or two, when she was taken ill. Poor woman from the bonny hills, where the bluebells bloom, I think everybody pitied her.

"She came into Penang to consult a doctor. The doctor was suspicious, for he was very well aware of the life her lord and master had led. He ordered her to the local hospital, and there watched the development of her case. Yes, the poor woman who had come from a quiet village where through the summers and dark Scotch winters she had dreamed no doubt of the hour when she could pour out her hoarded store of affection upon some worthy object, and had longed for the time when some honest man would call her 'wife'—well, she was to become something to shudder at. The victim of a loathsome disease communicated to her by one of her own race—his bridal gift.

"The end of that story? The doctor ordered her home with all speed to consult a specialist in Edinburgh. She died on board ship, before her friends and relations in



Bonnie Scotland saw her dreadful plight. As for him, if you go out to —— you cannot miss his bungalow. The last time I passed he was in a hammock, slung on the verandah, with a little Malay girl—she could not have been more than fourteen—keeping the flies off with a fan.”

## CHAPTER V

### THE BLENDING OF THE RIVERS

“CLUB gossip !” I hear some of my readers whisper in regard to the histories I have recounted in the last chapter. Well, they did form theme for the gossip of the clubs at the time, but that simple fact in no way detracts from their truth. Sometimes realities, as well as possibilities or even vague surmise, form the topic of conversation even in English clubs and from a few enquiries I was able to make I had no difficulty in verifying the practical accuracy of these illustrations of the ease with which the Western man adopts the morals of the East and of the dire results which occasionally spring from the disregard of the code of his race. There can be no doubt that in such cases the tragedy springs essentially from the imperfect assimilation of the Eastern moral code. It is but rarely that the Western man can bring himself to take the purely Oriental view of the woman. This simple fact goes far to explain why the position of concubine to the white man is so favourably regarded by the natives of our Empire in the East. Even if badly treated, from the Western point of view, the Eastern woman is better off, better housed, better clad, better fed, less of a drudge, with more liberty and a more real life of her own than as the wife of a native.

Even if the marriage is but a temporary one, it is usually happy while it lasts, and when it is ended provision for the future may be forthcoming, and if it is not, the discarded concubine has the prestige of her lost status to assist her in providing for the future. Thus the adoption of the morals of the East is made easy to the man of the West.

There is another side to the picture, and that is one not often touched upon. It is talked about in the clubs, it is true, but even there men hesitate before discussing it. Those who declare amongst themselves that morality is geographical, hesitate to recognise the plain truth that on occasion the microbe of Eastern immorality gets into the blood of the white woman and runs there an even more virulent course than in the case of the white man.

One such instance I heard from the same source as the two foregoing stories, and I will give it as near as I can remember in the narrator's own words. I will not vouch for its truth in every detail, but I learned enough of my informant to be aware that he was in a position to be assured that what he stated did occur and there was no reason for him deceiving me.

“The chief character in this drama was the wife of a civilian—suppose I call her Mabel, the name was not hers, by the way, but it will do as well as another. Her husband was a man of assured position, comfortably off, and the two came out with introductions which gave them the *entrée* everywhere. She was young, delicately framed, full of vivacity. They had been married two or three years, and as the husband had been in the East before, he knew pretty well what sort of a time a young and blooming English-



woman would have in the settlement—all the men at her feet and all the ‘tabbies’ putting the worst construction on the most innocent actions. That doesn’t matter much. If reputations could be blasted by tittle-tattle there wouldn’t be one left in the East. But we shed our Eastern reputations with our Eastern morals at Suez, and we do not find they follow us to England.

“However, as things go, the pair seemed reasonably happy and nothing seemed wanting to complete their bliss but the prattle of a baby in the bungalow, though some of the womenfolk of the brand to which I have alluded—and there are quite enough of them infesting this particular portion of the Lord’s vineyard—doubted if she would ever make her lord happy in this respect. They declared she was too pretty, delicate, and narrow waisted. Besides, she was undoubtedly fond of admiration, and was rarely to be seen about without some admirer in her train. Her name particularly was coupled with that of one man, a German youngster. He was only twenty. Strong—with the national tendency to be fat, pig-headed, and full of money, as well as beer.

“Mabel was, it was said, haunted by this young admirer. Certainly she was much in his company, and they were frequently driving about together. One day, whilst she was driving out, whether by accident or arrangement, she overtook the young German, who was walking along the road she had chosen for her drive. Naturally he entered her carriage. It was equally natural, perhaps, that a halt should be made at a spot where, between the bush flowers and thorny thickets, delicious peeps at the sea could be

obtained. It might not be altogether wise, but the youthful lover was only twenty and there were no prying eyes. They left the carriage and went for a stroll through the shrubbery, whilst the Malay coachman, a young, good-looking fellow with even features and eyes as dark as the raven's wing, sat on the box-seat of the carriage, almost immovable. Possibly his Malay sense of humour was tickled at the incident. The Oriental imagination puts only one construction upon such a situation.

“When the young wife and her youthful admirer returned from the ramble, Peter—that was the coachman's name—to all seeming, was half asleep. To all appearances he did not observe that his mistress was hot, flushed, and that her hair was dishevelled, that she appeared to have been annoyed, and looked as if her eyes had not been innocent of tears. Yet probably his eyes took in the situation, and, translating the signs by his own code of morals, decided that his mistress had been through the second gate on the road to ruin. He must have been puzzled thereafter. Silently the party entered the carriage. The German lighted a cigarette and looked vacantly out of the side of the carriage, and seemed lost in thought. Then, as they neared the city of ‘sorrow and sin’ the gallant coolly touched his hat, then the tips of Mabel's fingers, half smiled, and was gone. A little farther on, Mabel adjusted her thorn-torn hair and took the opportunity to warn Peter not to mention to the master who she had been out with.

“‘No, no, no!’ he replied, and his face became animated, and as a final proof of fidelity to his young mistress, he

drew his forefinger across his throat, in significance of what he would do before he would speak.

“The Malay loves you to trust him, but you live to curse yourself if you do.

“So the incident passed. No one heard of it. The mem-sahib had gone for a drive, and when she returned she had her bath; her husband had come in from business, admired her flushed looks, kissed her, and was gone into the Club—the stepping-stone to a good deal of matrimonial unhappiness in the East.

“Such I gather must have been the initial action which set the train of events which I am about to describe in motion. A high-spirited, passionate girl, with a devoted young admirer and a husband who had grown indifferent. Her restlessness was obvious. She was escorted everywhere by the German, and Peter, the Malay coachman, now became of necessity a confidante of his mistress. No doubt he was warned ‘not to tell tales out of school,’ and like most Malays, he knew how to be as silent as the grave and as watchful as the night owl. He was loyally devoted to his mistress. Her will and wishes were his law. He followed her like a faithful dog, watched her every movement, carried her love-notes to the German, and received his answers in return. At times he even ‘financed’ his mistress’s bridge debts by secretly pawning some of his master’s odds and ends, watches, old gold chains, and unused guns. He was indeed valuable to the woman, who seemed only too intent on giving the busybodies something to talk about. Probably it was only her way of attempting to win back the waning affection of her husband, for



certainly she showed symptoms of uneasiness. She was discontented, and irritable of temper. Evidently she had not ceased to love her husband, for more than once she betrayed the suspicions she felt as to his conduct. At this time, too, I think, she began to solace herself with the seductive peg. And here again Peter in this respect as in all others became her carrier and fetcher.

“The intrigue with the German did not endure for long. She took a strong aversion to him and avoided him when she could. She played bridge spasmodically, often drank whisky and soda openly, occasionally went for long walks along the dark road leading to the hill above, where the faithful Peter followed her at a respectful distance, to keep watch and ward over his beloved mistress.

“She would come home from such outings, done up ; throw her things off anyhow, get into a long wrapper, and recline on the verandah chair, where Peter would bring her whisky and soda, light her cigarettes, and at times sit near her and fan her to sleep. One night she had taken two or three whiskies and sodas and was merry and talkative. She called Peter to her side.

“Can you imagine the conversation which ensued ? I find no difficulty. You may suppose that she asked her faithful attendant pettishly what ailed her, since she always wanted him within sight. Perhaps she asked him whether he had cast a spell upon her, one of those charms of which the Malay held the secret, since she could only be quiet and contented when he was near. No doubt she thanked him for his devotion to the most lonely woman in

the world, and of course she finished by telling him that he must pay no attention to the nonsense she was talking, and, with a half-sigh, regretted the colour bar which stood between them.

“Is there any difficulty in imagining the feelings of the Malay as with his dark flashing eyes he watched the beautiful English girl-wife, as she lay loosely wrapped on the cane lounge while the wind rustled from the sea beyond, through the summer-blossoming trees, on to her dishevelled hair, and throwing it in profusion over her lovely white face.

“Peter, like many of his countrymen, was a good-looking chap. His eyes were magnificent, splendidly circled with the long black lashes that lent force to their charm, and lit his brown face up with a wonderful animation. That brown served to set off the brilliancy of his pure white teeth, set like pearls in a well-shaped mouth. He was young, strong, healthy, athletically built, could run like a deer, and had the ear of a stag. He was, in fact, a Malay Apollo. Added to this, he had the cunning of a fox. He knew (none better) the game of destruction that was being played in his master's house. Tales had been told in the bazaar of white women who had held out their arms to brown men, and while his heart leaped with exultation he would mix another peg, light another cigarette for his mistress, and listen, listen for any stray footsteps on the gravel garden-path. But there are wheels within wheels in establishments where native servants are counted by the score. A pair of old and far-seeing eyes were on the watch. That is how I am able to describe what happened.

“Mabel grew dreamy—the last drink seemingly had gone to her head. The cigarette fell from her lips, her hand dropped over the side of the cane chair. The wind rushed through the verandah and extinguished one of the two hanging lamps. She was alone with the Malay youth, alone, at night, with the wind rustling without and the devil playing on the Malay’s mind within. His whole frame trembled like an aspen leaf. He stood and gazed at the prostrate form of the helpless white woman. She moved restlessly on the cane chair. The youth bent over her until his face was warmed with her breath. Then with a keen glance around the verandah, a breathless ‘listen’ for coming footsteps, his eyes flashing in the only light that shone upon the face of his prostrate mistress and lighted up the thoughts of the villainy he contemplated, he quietly extinguished the verandah lamp. Then, creeping back to the couch, enkindled with the fires of passion within his soul, he caught the helpless girl in his arms in a feverish grasp and planted kiss after kiss on her irresponsible lips.

“She was only as a child in that powerful grasp. It would have been all over with her but for the fact that I have already mentioned. It was an old Malay gardener, who had been suspicious and was watching the scene, entered the front of the verandah and with steady hand relighted the extinguished lamps. He was a decent old chap, and he came to me afterwards, so that is how I know so much of this little idyll. His appearance on the scene effectually put a stop to Peter’s love-making.

“The youth released his grasp on his mistress’s arms,



and bounded forth like a wounded tiger to demand an explanation of the old Malay's presence. With uplifted hand, he threatened the interloper, while he hissed in Malay, 'Bullets find their homes in night prowlers. Beware the Malay blood when it boils.'

"The old man's steady indifference was perhaps the only method by which the younger man's hot blood could have been cooled. As he told me, he expected every moment that Peter would run amok, and it was not until the lamps were burning again that he ventured a word of warning as to the penalty which awaited the perpetrator of outrage.

"What Peter answered was too picturesque to bear translation, but his threats were both lurid and emphatic, and probably would have been put into force, but at that moment, providentially, the telephone bell on the open verandah rang out into the midnight air, its alarm steadying the Malay youth like magic. The Malay race is stupidly superstitious and the older man was swift to take advantage of the interruption.

" 'What wouldst thou do, misguided youth? Hark ye! The signal that the devil in the bell watches thy master's wife. To thy bed in hiding. Go, before it is too late. I will stay on thy behalf,' exclaimed the old man.

"For a while the youth stood gazing at the helpless form of his mistress. The telephone bell rang again, and yet again. Curious, the effect of the instrument of Western civilization on the Oriental mind. Peter was quite unnerved.

“ ‘Go,’ commanded the old man again, ‘ere it be too late,’ and he tottered off to answer the telephone call.

“ Peter gave one more glance at the prostrate form of his mistress and, with a defiant gaze into the darkness, pressed his lips to hers, the mad seal to a mad passion. Then he released his grasp and was gone to hiding in his own room at the rear of the stables, which looked out from the back garden on to the sea.

“ That telephone message was from the lord and master of the house to say he was on his way home. It was 2.30 a.m., so that you can gather that he could not be held free from blame for what had happened. With difficulty the old man, with the aid of his wife, got Mabel to bed. She was in a stupor that was not entirely alcoholic. Peter had some knowledge of drugs.

“ When the husband returned everything was quiet at the bungalow. He went straight to his own room, and the old man sought Peter’s lodgings to prevent, if possible, the mad Malay youth ‘embracing trouble’ by embracing his young mistress.

“ He found the Malay staring out into the moonlight night. He had arrived at the banks of the ‘River of Love,’ but he had been balked in his endeavour to plunge into the turbulent stream. His thoughts were now divided between love and revenge, and his Malay blood forbade the exercise of any restraint. I should like to have heard the conversation between the old man and the young. The old man told me enough of it to give me an insight into the native point of view upon some matters which I had not antici-

pated. The old man, as old men will, thought advice would banish love. 'Thou art mad,' he said, 'thou enterest upon a dangerous enterprise without knowing the end. Never enter a forest without marking the spot where you can leave it at will. Who drives a tiger from the jungle to the open plain without first preparing a safe retreat? Seek not the end which befalls the wisest man who gives his soul to a woman. What hast thou, with thy skin that matches the hard bark that clings to the trees of the jungle, to do with a frail white woman, the white wife of thy master? Surely it tempts thee to thy destruction, for the end is a rope without ground for thy feet to rest upon. The white stream and the yellow shall not flow in the same channel and though they be mixed in the same vessel they will not blend.'

" 'Blend, blend!' exclaimed the youth, firing up at the old man's simile. 'You speak the words of the childhood that comes upon men when their blood is cold and their senses fail. Your eyes are at fault, old man, or you would have seen that the yellow and white streams blend without difficulty, when the white stream wills. What Malay maiden, being fair to look upon, will escape the white man's embrace? And of the blending are there not many proofs? Use your eyes, old man, or think not that if your sight fails a skin is upon my eyes.'

"The old man replied with the argument of his race that woman was the property of the purchaser. But Peter's Orientalism had been tinctured with modern ideas. 'You talk of things you know nothing,' he retorted. 'If the white man may choose for himself, so is it with the white



woman. There is but one way in the country whence they come. When they choose, man or woman, none can say nay to their choice, and I tell you this white woman's choice has fallen on me. Can you give reason why I should not be chosen ? ' he asked, with rising passion. ' Has not her husband taken our maidens to his bed and forgotten his wife ? Am I not more comely than the pink pig that basked in the light of her eyes ? Are my limbs not as well formed, or as shapely ? Can I not run many miles without panting ? Have I not faced the tiger and wild boar in the forest and found their hearts with my kris ? If the little pink pig had taken her, none would have said aught, and because she sees my arms are open, and she longs for the arms of a man, who art thou that should step between and say not for thee are the kisses of the fair woman from the West ? I tell thee, old man, that the mingling of the waters shall not be prevented, for the streams are in flood.'

" It was here that the old man fired his last bolt. ' There is wisdom in thy words,' he began diplomatically, ' and if the white woman left her home and husband to follow thee, there would be reason also. But thou knowest that the juice of the hemp was in the cup thou gavest her to drink. Come, it is time to be honest and plain. Didst thou not give her the herb that fills the brain with strange fancies and clouds the reason of those who drink ? I ask thee, O youth, because I would save thee. I am an old man and my ashes will soon spread in death. Life's fire in me will soon be done. It is flickering its last ashes. Therefore, youth,

‘speak unto him who would save thee. Speak thou but truth.’

“ ‘And if I did,’ was the bold reply, ‘was it not because I read in her eyes that she would welcome the draught that would banish fear. The white woman dreads the shadows, and did I not banish them for her happiness. Soon there will be no need for philtre or potion, for the river that flows into the sea is no longer a white river or a brown. It is part of the sea.’ And then to close the conversation the youth rose proudly to his feet while his mentor puffed away at his long Malay pipe, sending curl after curl of smoke into the night air.

“ Then he too rose to depart, and said, ‘May the Prophet forgive you, for the fire of your blood will condemn your body !’

“ ‘The fire of my blood is the same fire which burns in the white man’s veins.’ He stretched out his arm. There was a flash of steel as he drew the blade of a knife lightly across his skin. ‘Know this as a token that even so will be spilt the blood of he who crosses my path.’

“ There was no mistaking either, the earnestness nor his intention, and it was not surprising that my old informant should have thought discretion to be the better part and determined to keep his own counsel concerning the scene he had witnessed.

“ Mabel remained in bed for several days. She was ill—‘fever’ the local gossips asserted. Many times she asked where she was. One or twice she asked for her attendant, and then dozed off again into a stupor.

“ Her husband was not alarmed. He had other diver-

sions, which her illness left him free to pursue. He little imagined that a pair of keen eyes watched all his outgoings and incomings, and could have told him with closer detail than he himself could have remembered what he had done.

“His wife was soon able to resume her place on the verandah with the Malay boy in attendance. Little did he imagine that every detail of his diversions was repeated to her and that her soul was growing sick with despair. His wife’s failure to respond to his careless kindness he put down to lassitude after her attack of fever, otherwise he might have proved more careful.

“I think it was just about ten days later that the opportunity for which Peter undoubtedly had schemed with true Oriental subtilty, arrived. On that evening two figures stole quietly into the verandah of a house at which an hour or so previously the husband had been set down from a rickshaw. One of them, a woman, gazed through an aperture formed by a displaced lath in the blind, and, with a choking sob, dropped half-fainting into the strong arms of her companion, who bore her swiftly and silently away. It was not surprising that the woman welcomed the drugged draught that her companion held to her lips, and this time there was no elderly Malay to interrupt.

“What the English wife thought when the effect of the drug wore off and she realised the step she had taken, no one knows except herself and, perhaps, Peter. What she did was common knowledge. No one knew of her adventure save her and her partner, and I think it must have been at



his instigation—for the Malay is an ingenious devil—that she had made known to her husband what she had seen through the rift in the blind. Nor was she content with letting him know, she took the still more effective step of making the whole of her friends acquainted with the details, and Singapore soon rang with the story of the jealous wife who had surprised her husband in a liaison with a little native girl. She was, of course, pitied by everybody, and she could not have taken a more effective step to divert suspicion. She played up to the popular conception of the wronged wife too, although she refused to leave her husband. Really, she was the picture of outraged morality. She secluded herself, was not at home to acquaintances, and was rarely seen except when she went out in the cool of the evening for long walks with the faithful Malay in attendance at a respectful distance. There was another reason for this isolation. It soon became bruited abroad that Mabel was in a condition which ‘ladies who love their lords would wish to be’—I don’t know whether I have the quotation right. Everybody hoped for the best, and thought that the baby’s hands would pull the matrimonial knot tight again. The husband was as anxious as anybody, and I wonder what he thought when the doctor told him that the new-born babe was black. It was a fitting *dénouement*, but it made a good many men out here think hard, and for a while quite a remarkable wave of morality swept over the place and good-looking Malay boys were not in extravagant demand as household servants.

“What became of them all? Well, there was a sequel. The husband remained here, he had to. But his wife went home. She has stopped there and he is still here. The child was given to the nuns. Peter fared the worst. He was found dead on the beach near the native quarter, stabbed to the heart, report said, in some native quarrel. But however he came by his injury, one thing is clear. You cannot preach by example that the white man may mate with the black woman and not expect that the black man will not claim the same right. If the rivers are not to mingle, the colours must be kept apart. That is, of course, if a white man’s country is to be a white woman’s country too.”

With that deduction of my acquaintance I am disposed to agree. India is to-day, perhaps, a white woman’s country, for white women have made it, at least to outward seeming, their own. But in the farther East where the native inhabitants have not had the spirit of independence hopelessly crushed out of them, and the primitive passions have not been subdued until they have apparently ceased to exist the white woman will be in peril if the white man will not order his life circumspectly. There is another reflection on this point, too, which may well be set down here. Any doctrine of the emancipation of woman preached in the East would have the worst possible results. So long as the native woman is regarded as a mere chattel there is nothing derogatory to the white man in her being purchased and added to his household possessions; but elevate her to the status of the white woman, endow her with a soul and the right to call it her own and the black man will no longer

bow down to the white ruler without question. If the black woman is the white man's equal, so, too, is the black man. The great white god has his feet of clay. He must needs be careful lest the petted girl-wives of the bachelor bungalows reveal the fact to their kindred.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE CO-OPERATIVE HAREM

ONE of the eye-openers which I received in regard to the ready way in which the young Western man adapts himself to local custom was on the occasion of a visit I paid to a well-known Selangor town. One of the younger European employees invited me to his bungalow to dine, and I had an excellent opportunity afforded me of becoming acquainted with the domestic arrangements of the young Westerner. For economical reasons several of them ran a joint establishment and messed together. Here they lived and dined. No women were allowed on these premises, except white women who came as guests with their male belongings, for white women do not customarily visit bachelor bungalows unescorted.

I expressed my doubt that the bachelors' Eden was so Eveless as it appeared to be in a country where women were, so to speak, "two a penny."

My friend who had taken me to the mess smiled and said, "Oh, well, they are all responsible for one woman, all but that thin, spare, sandy-haired young fellow, who will neither eat nor talk. He is virtue personified; all the other chaps keep a woman of convenience."

This is how they do it. They pool up so much cash, rent and furnish a bungalow on the outskirts of the town, provided with six or eight rooms. Each man rents or buys right out a girl. The girls are nearly all of different nationalities. One man prefers a Malay, another a Chinese, yet another a Japanese, or a Tamil. No half-breed woman is allowed amongst these pure breeds, and no man is allowed to have more than one woman. The expense is shared with the rent, and an elderly housekeeper, who has done years of battling and battering about Singapore, is put in charge of the co-operative harem. The furniture of the place is of the plainest. Food is on the same mark, and the girls have but scanty clothes. Each girl washes her own clothes, mends and makes and generally does her best to make herself attractive to her white lord and master.

The old dame in charge watches the girls, looks after their food and health, and amuses them through the long hours of the day with tales of love of the early days, when her grandmother was a princess with the regulation dress of a necklet of beads and a brass anklet. At intervals these girls work slippers, paint sarongs, work fancy handkerchiefs, and do drawn thread work for bed-covers and pillow-cases. These are mostly presents for their white protectors.

At night the young bankers, merchants, clerks, etc., visit their mistresses. Each has his own room, where he lolls about, playing with his maiden, who is as nimble as a kitten. She teaches her lord the Malay language, and he teaches her English—sometimes very plain English. As familiarity breeds boldness, she will nine times out of ten

chide her lord for his doings, scolds him often, and is now and again pert and she now and again "nips" him for presents.

The girl generally develops good limbs and a shapely form under proper treatment, good food, and abundant bathing. Not infrequently it happens that the more attractive of them exercise so much influence over their white protectors that they find themselves in possession of good clothes and at the head of establishments of their own. It is by no means uncommon, indeed, in an alliance started in this way for the man to throw off all restraint and, neglecting to conform even to the semblance of Christian duty, to live openly with his coloured mistress.

With good treatment these women are invariably honest to their masters. If children are born to the unauthorised unions in the co-operative harem, they are quickly despatched as a rule to an old beldam, who keeps a fowl-farm outside Singapore. I am told there are more babies there than fowls. So much per head is paid to this old "baby farmer" for every child she takes in, but never lets out. A baby boy costs about thirty dollars to dispose of, a baby girl will be readily taken in at the low figure of twenty dollars. Once they disappear from the parent's bungalow he has nothing to worry about until the next child is born. Thus the babies end in the smoke of the Eastern fire, that burns the blood and destroys the reason of the Western man.

This callousness as to the fate of the children is the most hideous feature of the arrangement. It makes the laughter and mirth which peals through the still moonlit night



bitterly ironical. It seems strange that anyone should forget all the lessons learned at his mother's knees, and remembering only that he is in the East, live the life of the East, draining the cup of pleasure until the very dregs are reached. There is only one thing to be said for it. At least it banishes from the voluptuary the danger of being scorched by the terrible Eastern fire—Disease !

I wonder what the parents of the owners of this co-operative harem would say if they knew of the sort of establishment their hopeful children were running. It is, of course, no news that European exiles in Oriental lands or on the frontiers of civilisation accommodate themselves with remarkable facility to the local standard of morals. This is, I fear, inevitable. It is a subject which may profitably occupy the attention of the clergy, or of those laymen whose taste or religious zeal runs in the direction of purity crusades.

It is a matter, too, which greatly concerns those great commercial services which annually absorb large numbers of young Englishmen. It is a matter also which immediately concerns thousands of people at home, a matter of grave public interest, on which it is important that the public should be fully informed, on which it ought to form a very definite opinion, and to express it unequivocally. What would be the thought if it were suddenly discovered that it was the custom for all ranks of the army serving in India to keep their native mistresses in their quarters, and to have their half-caste progeny running about the barracks ; if the Government connived at and encouraged this state of things ; and if we heard such stories about subalterns

and recruits as are told about lads going out to the East, the India Government would be pretty quickly required to set its house in order. The same thing may be as justly and as strongly required of civilian corporations, who for their own purposes are recruiting a constant succession of youngsters from England, and offering them every inducement to immorality and depravity a few weeks after they have left school. The whole business is a horrible scandal. It is only possible because the truth is quite unknown in England, for if it were known the supply of recruits would be quickly cut off until the conditions of life had been entirely reformed. One may hope, therefore, that the publication of the truth will do something towards abating this evil.

And here let me offer another piece of evidence as to the effect of what is now the "custom of the country" upon a clean-living young Englishman. It is contained in two letters now in my possession. The writer was not twenty-two years of age, and he had gone to take up a post on a rubber plantation with but the vaguest ideas of what the life was like. The letters were sent to a brother in England, and but for the elimination of personal and family references which might disclose his identity I have made no alterations in them. They are peculiarly frank and quite sufficiently explanatory. Incidentally, I may remark they serve also to point out one of the difficulties which beset the unsophisticated white man who sets up an establishment for a coloured lady.

“DEAR ———,

KOEKABOEMI, JAVA.

“This place appeals to me immensely. Rubber is booming, and we fellows have to work dashed hard. The Directors insist on catch crops paying the working exes. and accounting for dividends. So we are outside all day, looking after weeding and superintending labour. This is really dangerous work here, though.

“It is only a few days ago that young ——— was found murdered in an open field, brutally done to death by his own coolies. When brought in he had over thirty kris stabs in his body. These cases are very numerous around here lately. The niggers stab you while you wait, and if you don't wait they run after you.

“I am comfortably settled in a nice shady bungalow with my little native coloured girl as housekeeper.

“Every one of our fellows has to get a girl to look after him. Scottie, the manager, has even two. But then he's manager: and the girls are very cheap. This must have been the incentive, for Scottie comes from Aberdeen.

“My *bini* is a nice little girl, dead gone on me. She will even sometimes travel for miles—per boot, or rather on foot—for the natives are not allowed to wear boots here—up the higher part of the estate to bring me a cold drink or my ‘makan,’ which usually consists of curry and rice and an apology for a chicken, prepared in various forms. Chickens are very cheap here—and so are ducks.

“How do you like my girl's photograph?

“She holds me with an unknown spell,  
She folds me in her heart's embrace,  
If this is love I cannot tell,  
I watch her face.”



“ She keeps the place like a new pin, and looks after me like a real lord : not one of your “ broke-up ” lords ! Cooking, waiting at table, and mending my clothes, do not seem too much for her to do. She comes and fans me as I lie on my long chair on the verandah. She even can anticipate all my wishes.

“ She certainly keeps the house lively, and the pretty little thing has become quite a necessity to me, and has imbued my little house, ‘ Under the shade of the Sheltering Palms,’ with that home-like air, which is so essential to comfort. I send also a photo of my parlor and ‘ missus.’

“ 25 Guilders I paid for her as an *ana dara*, and give her eight a month, which she passes on to her people. Pretty cheap for a maid of all work and a mistress of one. I have written to the mater. Chin chin, your fond brother ——.”

“ P.S. I went across to a neighbouring estate for a few days, but it was most uninteresting. Nothing to listen to or see, except a crowd of gin-drinking Dutchmen.

“ You cannot knock around here without drinking, and it does make a fellow ill. I really cannot see any point in spending one’s money on the vile liquor sold here. I was glad to get back to that tiny cottage on the fringe of the wood and to my little yaller *pro tem*. wife.

“ She almost screamed with joy. These girls *do* seem to go sweet on you, if you only deal with them properly. My little *adinda* is all for love, and in coaxing an extra guilder out of me she is an adept. I never refuse her. Her wants are so few. A gaudy coloured sarong and a flimsy jacket. A fellow could not possibly refuse little extras to his murmuring maiden. Yours, ——.”

“DEAR —,

“I am up to my neck in trouble. Java is an infernal country. Nothing goes straight that can possibly go crooked.

“When I got home to my bungalow a day or two ago, my wife ‘*pro tem.*’ was ill in bed. The nurse was in the house, hustling and bustling like a fly in a bottle.

“She said to me in Malay in a half-whisper, as she passed : ‘It will soon be over now.’

“I waited on the verandah. No tea—no food of any kind. All the spirits and the tinned foods had vanished from the store-room at the end of the verandah. I was hungry, out of temper, and out of place. Full possession of the entire bungalow had been taken by a mob of niggers, jabbering lunatics I had never seen before. They were all running backwards and forwards with this and that, and goodness knows what not—around and inside the house—kicking up a fearful din. I could go to Hades for all they cared ! I was simply starving.

“At last I heard a child cry, and a sort of cheer escaped from the mob of the Malay women. Then all was hushed. I could hear the whispering and muttering within. I heard an old beldam say :

“ ‘I will go an’ tell Master now.’

“She came out on to the verandah, bowing, scraping, and muttering.

“I relieved her.

“ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘the child is born ?’

“She nodded assent.

“ ‘What’s it like ?’ I rejoined,

“ She smirked a sickly smile, nodded, bowed, grinned, bowed again, hesitated, and nodded her head and grinned again.

“ ‘ What’s it like ? ’ I now thundered.

“ She trembled, then stood still, looked me in the face, and replied, ‘ Black, just plain black ! ’

“ ‘ Black ! ’ I echoed. ‘ No white at all about it ? ’

“ ‘ No white, Sahib, it’s black, black, plain black.’ She grinned. My breath and pride left me at the same instant.

“ ‘ Black . . . no white ? ’ I mused. Some mistake surely !

“ I entered the back room, where the mother and child lay. By the bedside sat my black tamby servant, pouring my vinegar—in fact all the vinegar in the house—on the head of his wife, and mine. Mine !

“ The old hag was right. The kiddie was black, all black, and my tamby was the acknowledged father and my wife’s husband.

“ He grinned broadly at the joke. So did the woman. I rung off ! The curtain went down. Biff ! Bang ! out went ‘ William the masher ! ’

“ I could not help laughing at the pride the tamby took in his youngster. I had simply bought as a virtuous maiden a married woman, and taken her husband into my employ as a single man. The arrangement was productive.

“ They both took me in, and I soon saw that they took themselves out. Next day I received a piece of blue paper, a summons for belting the tamby. First, I had to square the tamby not to proceed, then I had to square the magistrate to allow the matter to drop. So between squaring on and



squaring off, the black on white, the white on black, I was savage enough to press the court for my own committal as the delinquent, as an example to all good young men, who should die young—or if not, swear off eternally ‘the yellow girl.’

“It is a warm place here, George. But when the temperature has worked your mercury to the ‘topmost red line’ of the glass, some ill wind blows you away and your courage cools to zero.

“Your hair now stands on end, and you are wondering what’s going to happen next, and how long your hair will keep standing.

“I hope you are still a regular attendant at the Bible-class, and that Milly and the baby are properly fed, and the back gate is kept locked. . . . Heartiest salaams from your ever devoted brother, ——.”

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHILDREN UNDER EASTERN SKIES

**P**ERHAPS of all the countries of the East where the problem of the irregular union between white and brown has arisen it is the most acute in Burma ; and when one comes to consider it, the reason why this should be so is easily understood. The country and the people make a special appeal to the white resident.

Burma, the land of mysteries, the land of charm, the land of reminiscences, the land that excites the imagination and forces memory back through the ages, is peopled with a delightful race, and the religious rites of these children of Buddha, their customs, their priests, and their pious nuns have a charm entirely their own. Its comely sons and daughters, with their dark, laughing, joy-searching eyes, their smooth, well-proportioned features, their glossy yellow skins, are pleasant to look upon. One realises that they are gently bred.

The Burmese are, indeed, a strictly clean and comely race. They love dress, frivolity, ease ; they never tire of outgoings, sightseeings, ornaments. They look upon the world as a good joke, and make the best of all things to hand. The heart of a Burmese girl is joyous if she can sport a fine dress or two and adorn her hands,

neck, and ankles with gold, or even plated articles of ornament.

The young men of Burma are as proud and vain of their personal appearance as the maids of the fields. They spend all their money and exhaust their credit on finery. I have seen a young Burma "knut" wearing silk socks and a lace collar worth at least a ten-pound note. Their native silk "lungyis" are said to be worth in some cases as much as £40 a piece. Upon their silk head-dresses they also do not spare expense. In public the Burmese are quiet, dignified, and rather reserved. They are very proud, but not arrogant, or ignorant, and respect the feelings of others.

They are conscious of the colour of their race and its importance. They are exceedingly loyal, are hospitable to a fault, gracious and kind. They are the "children of peace and smiles in the East," the aristocrats of the coloured races. In a way they might even be termed the "Irish of the East"—without the grievance—in wit, mirth, generosity, and fun. They are all sportsmen from the child to the man. Hundreds of them own and back racehorses. If they win they mainly express their delight in true Irish fashion, and if they lose they pay and look pleasant, even if they are surprised at the jockey's use of his biceps. The Burmese get great fun out of their racecourse at Rangoon. They race each other with little ponies and the excitement is intense. Everything, from work to wife, is forgotten on race days! The wife is often forgotten on other days, when work is more seriously thought of.

They loan and trust instinctively their open houses to



passing strangers. It is proverbial in the country that one may rest assured of a Burman giving the stranger a bed ; in fact, you can rest in peace in it until the second cock crows on the morrow.

They treat their women well, and love-matches are by no means unknown. Indeed, the love-making of the innocent Burmese is fully as poetic as that of the Irish. It is pure as the day dawn. The girls of the well-to-do families are coy, shy, natural, and sweet, and as clean as a polished pin ; and, powdered, perfumed, and bedecked with flowers of the field, they look quite charming, even to the Western eye.

In the backwoods, away from civilisation, the maidens are as simple and sweet as wild flowers. No white man, whose blood is not as chilly as ice, could live long " out back " without asking the maids of the bush a question.

Once a Burma girl loves—she loves entirely, she knows no half-measures. The man who takes her first takes her body and soul. It is then that the temporary alliance with the white man too often becomes a tragedy. She will cling to her white love like putty to glass. Time and age only more strongly cements the love she bears him. Sometimes when the glass of their love breaks by separation the Burma woman will in her despair be stirred to action which entirely transforms her gentle clinging nature. Love to her is the world, the world is a heaven with the love of her lord and master, and without his love the world is hell ! She acts accordingly—father, mother, children, home, country—all are forgotten. The world and the world's affairs are nothing to her. To the deserted women of Burma death is

a welcome release. Too often she seeks and finds it. Not always without a struggle to retain the faithless lover.

I remember a Yankee youth who had lived a year with a pretty Burma girl, coming hot foot to Moulmein one fine morning.

“What’s the matter?” asked a friend; “Escaped from a forest fire?”

“No,” replied the fugitive. “I am escaping from my Burma girl, and ‘the girl I left behind me’ will soon be in front of me if I rest here.”

“Why, say,” he remarked, after a pause, “it’s far more easy to get melted butter out of a mad dog’s mouth than to escape from a Burma girl once she’s had an experience of the inside of a white man’s bungalow.”

His companions laughed mightily, but it was no joke to the “escaped,” nor, alas, to the deserted “wife.” He took to his heels and the first ship setting sail to the “Land of the Wooden Nutmegs.”

The American, whether from the United States or Canada, is, by the way, strongly represented amongst the white residents of Burma.

I met one at Mandalay. He was something in the oil line, had a good berth, and was a high-spirited young fellow of the guide type, ready to say “good morning” to the devil when he meets him, but not before. I had no difficulty in getting him to talk quite frankly upon the subject upon which I was seeking enlightenment.

He told me that there were more than five hundred Americans and Canadians after oil in Burma, that being principally strong samples of vigorous manhood it was

hardly likely that chastity was a very common virtue amongst them. So far as his experience went, once in Burma his countrymen readily adopt its customs, and if occasion serves improve upon them until they may be classed as experts at the business of the marriage of convenience.

“Not to put it too finely,” he declared, “I can safely say that out of five or six hundred Americans here 98½ per cent keep Burma women. Some keep two, and in rare cases you find an old ‘Stars and Stripes’ joker, with a constitution like a ’bus horse, having three women to feed, and perhaps a dozen ‘pepper and salt’ youngsters to father.”

Generally speaking, however, the American, he was convinced, kept to the monogamous establishment, yet he estimated that there must be fully ten thousand half-breed bastards roaming about in the jungle as the net human results of the Burma oil boom. On his showing, the yearly “crop” of youngsters claiming Americans as their male parents should be about one thousand five hundred.

From my own observations it was evident that the American men are strong, lusty, hard-working fellows, vigorous in mind and body. The living is good, the pay better, and it is not unnatural that they should seek companionship for the long, lonely nights. The promptings of nature, exacerbated by the climate, fostered by the surroundings and the customs, are too strong for the majority, as they might have been for St. Anthony had he been an oil-borer in Burma.

The young American, like the young Britisher, with the freshness of youth in his veins, quickly adapts himself



to the customs of the country. The cheapness of young, clean girls on sale staggers him. He sees on all sides living examples of the life led by his old mates who have been there before, and he soon adopts the custom as though to the manner born. Yes, the customs of the country suit their tastes and inclinations.

Many of these young men have only just left the Baptist corps in America or Canada, where they used to sing in unison, "Hold the fort, for I am coming," but they take to the new order of things in Burma as agreeably as ducks to the water.

"This is the goodliest place in all earth," remarked one such youth to me. "It's swift, sure, just like ice-cream on fire—hospitality ain't got no stops or commas in these parts," remarked his companion. "Guess," chipped in another, "this place is Eden simplified, without the garden, and fortunately a big increase in the feminine population."

They provide themselves with partners in the simplest possible manner. It is soon known about the district when new white men have arrived at the oil wells. It's a regular market-day at the oil wells when three or four well-brought-up American boys are to be supplied with temporary helpmeets.

The girls are generally bright, shy, well-formed, and dressed in their best clothes—which are scanty in the extreme. They vary in age from thirteen to sixteen years. Some may be younger, but it is rare for girls under thirteen to be sold, as their parents have a superstitious dread of marrying their children before maturity. Maturity is attained at an early age in Burma, and thirteen is usually

the marriageable age. Sometimes, it is true, they are sold at twelve without any noticeable ill results, but they are generally kept until they are thirteen: superstition wills it so.

Some of these girls bring good prices, that is, for Burma. The Americans always pay spot cash, and never let anything stand on account. The Burma mothers like that. The Americans also have the reputation of treating their wives, of commerce or convenience, very well, and the Upper Burma mother, hoping to do her best for her daughter, will part with her to an American youth for a few rupees less than the ordinary rates for this very reason. The present rate now runs as high as one hundred rupees—£6 13s. 4d. of English money—but she must be exceedingly comely to reach that figure. To attain it she must have been well-fed and her toilette carefully attended to. Still, if she has a good face, large eyes, and large mouth, good teeth, and a laughing, taking manner, she will fetch one hundred rupees and may be one hundred and twenty.

Short, stumpy, skinny, ill-fed girls, with a sickly look in their eyes and no flesh on their bones, who have the appearance of being underfed and overworked, are a drug in this matrimonial market, and if they sell at all, twenty to thirty rupees is as much as their mothers receive for them.

They are generally bought as house assistants to work for the higher-priced "Belles of the Wilderness." If, as is not infrequently the case, their personal appearance improves under the new conditions, they may find themselves sharing marital honours in the household they have been engaged in. But the average price which the ordinary

dark, saffron-skinned girl of Upper Burma will realise for her people is between fifty and sixty rupees. The higher rates are usually realised by the straw-coloured Eurasian girl. Not altogether a pleasant consideration this, one would imagine, for the fathers whose daughters are thus foredoomed to assist them in the bastardisation of the East.

I knew of one such girl thus sold, whose life history was pathetic in the extreme. I never think of that girl without tears coming into my eyes. The confession will probably excite derision in Burma, where any such foolish sensibility is just about as credible as the devil saying his prayers. Still, that is a fact.

She was undeniably beautiful, her skin a pale straw colour, and she had dark, flashing eyes, long jet lashes, and arched eyebrows matching her hair, which tumbled in profusion almost to her heels, black as the raven's wing, and shining with the softness and lustre of the black pearl. She was a well-set-up girl with beautifully turned limbs; her ankles, adorned with rows of glass beads, a princess might have envied; her form was perfect. She was, in fact, a Eurasian of the second cross, between the white and the brown. I do not know until I saw her that I ever realised the full enormity of the mixed marriage which thus brought white men's children into the Eastern marriage mart. She was considerably above the normal height, and grace personified. It was truly horrible to see this child practically offered for sale to the highest bidder for a Burma marriage; yet it was the custom of the country.

I was at the oil wells when this white man's daughter was



brought in to pass, for a few counters, into the possession of one of those whose blood ran in her own veins, to be his servant and his toy for a few fleeting years and to be cast off at last when his fancy waned or his business called him elsewhere.

She was dressed after the Burma custom, excepting that her hair hung loose in profusion about her scarcely covered limbs. She wore a gaudy-coloured muslin tunic, thrown carelessly over one shoulder and draped on the body in diagonal form to the knees. One arm and one breast alone were exposed. She was shy, and trembled almost to the fainting point. She clung piteously to her mother, whilst the Canadian and the American hot-bloods almost fought openly to see who would possess her. There she stood and trembled and was afraid, while the youthful barterers outbid each other until the girl fell to the lot of the bidder of one hundred and eighty rupees. Her purchaser was a Canadian, a lad who certainly could not have been more than twenty-two. He was the youngest of all the wild boy contingent, handsome, well-set-up, and full of energy and the joy of life. Looked at from the purely natural point of view there could be no possible objection to his mating with Mia Mia, for such was the girl's name. The eugenists would have been bound to applaud. The youth had been oil-boring since he was sixteen, and knew when he had "struck oil" as well as any of his elders. In this instance he had undoubtedly made a bargain, and he was not long in conducting the new-made bride, wedded under the hammer, to his bungalow. It was, as it happened, his first Burma marriage, and his devotion to his purchased

wife was so obvious that one of his companions remarked to him one day : " Have a care, boy, have a care ! The most delicate flower will only stand plucking once ; it soon fades, crumbles, and dies. Build your present castle of love on piles with nuts and screws so that you can screw and unscrew and screw and shift at will. Some day you will have to quit this country and take your stand in the altar at your own land with a white woman for a bride."

" Why, she's white, or nearly so," he replied, " and when I do quit she will quit with me."

" You can't do it," replied the brother borer. " The States won't accept your dusky wife ; you'll get no customs ticket to pass her along, so you had better look ahead."

" If they pass her out," he replied savagely, " I'll pass out too." It may be that he is of the same opinion still. I hope so, for he was a fine youth. But if he has made the girl he purchased for one hundred and eighty rupees his wife in law as well as in deed the case would be almost unique, certainly in the oil districts, for practically every man throughout the length and breadth of Burma, working in the oil wells, keeps his Burma wife. The exceptions can be counted on your fingers, and naturally the number of illegitimate children is large. That is the most lamentable part of the whole system. Heaven alone knows where it is going to end, for if any of the borers for oil are ordered home, or to Sumatra, or Borneo, they have already fathered numerous illegitimate youngsters in one jungle, and in a new country they start afresh. Of course, more wives, more children.

A good many of them do realise their responsibility to

some extent. When they are ordered away from Burma they often make arrangements with the nuns to take the children off their hands. These good ladies are willing to take them in for a lump sum down and to ask no questions. The amount asked is rarely large, then the husband hands his concubine a present in cash, some of the furniture in the bungalow, and gives her the dog on the chain in the back yard. The Burmese women are mighty fond of dogs. She also gets the parrot on the front verandah, her husband's cast-off clothes, a picture or two, and last, but not least, a written character, which merely states that she is a clean woman, she can cook a bit, does not drink spirits or chew betel-nut (that nauseously red, sticky nut, the red juice of which stains the lips and is odiously repulsive to Western eyes). Of course, in many ways the parting is nothing more than a termination of a business contract. But there are exceptions. Nothing but death will part some of the Burma women from their husbands, whom they love with the mad love of their race, and the history of one such marriage I propose to tell in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PRICE OF CONTINENCE

I AM afraid that the contents of this chapter will come as a shock to a good many of my readers. All I can say is that I regret the necessity. But, after all, it is surely in the interests both of the white rulers and of the coloured dependent races that the truth should be told and faced. You cannot attempt to interfere with human nature without danger. If you do, you distort it and produce something malign. Attempt to crush back the normal functioning of healthy humanity and you produce corruption, a festering decay which saps the springs of manhood. Especially is this the case in the East.

Some pious and well-meaning persons advocate, in these regions of heat and distemper, a life of continence. I do not say such is an unattainable ideal. But the white man who can retain purity of mind as well as body in the East is certainly superhuman. The continent life, I say with emphasis, is unsuitable to the climate and the environment, the customs and the usage, of the Orient. Continence is laudable, perhaps desirable, but it can be achieved at too great an expense. All my observation and experience go to show that it brings in its train much misery, fills the hospitals, and provides tenants for asylums of lunacy, or

keeps the grave-digger busy. Men in this climate, especially young men, wither under the abnormal strain, and not infrequently in their effort to keep to the Western code of morality, find that life is a burden greater than they can bear.

Really, continence has to the healthy man or woman no abiding place in the East, where Nature asserts itself with a thousand times as much strength and force as it does in the West. Why this should be the case I do not pretend to explain. But the fact remains that what is comparatively easy in cold climates, where men have decent surroundings with lovable, pious, good examples before them, with full occupation for the mind and healthy employment for the body, is stupendously difficult in the tropics. To avoid the dangers the moralist will undoubtedly recommend early marriage. This again is a counsel of impossibility to the Eastern resident in nine cases out of ten. Further, it is only exceptionally that the modern white woman is fitted to endure an Eastern environment. Too often when placed in the unaccustomed *milieu* she is a dismal failure, and to some white men who have tried the experiment she has been an absolute hindrance. Indeed, the majority of white men realise that it is absolutely unfair to ask or to induce white women to domicile and fulfil the functions of womanhood in many of the regions where they find themselves compelled to live.

If one leaves the Western moral code out of the question, therefore, there is much to be said in favour of the concubinage so largely practised. It is the cheapest and most convenient to the surroundings. It has, of course, its

own dangers, and the question of the children born into bastardisation is a grave problem which needs to be faced. I fear to-day that the refusal to face it means an appalling butchery of the innocents before they have time to give a sound scream in God's universe, while if they are allowed to live, too often they are deserted, or handed over to the care of those who will train the boys to become thieves and rear the girls for a worse fate.

Yet even with these drawbacks it is better than the unsavoury system of harlotage. This is the worst and most accursed system of all in the East. It brings with it disease and death, poisons the blood and rots the heart as surely as the sun rises each day. It spells degradation, lowering man to the vilest state of the vilest animal life. The authorities know its ravages are worse a million times than any black plague. Yet these authorities, fully conscious of the national danger, are supine. Hypocrisy reigns where reason should act. The subject is not discussed in polite circles. A convenient blindness and a studied deafness is the correct pose, and so the youth of Britain is allowed to walk blindfold, so to speak, into the cesspits of corruption and contagion in its most deadly form, without let or hindrance. The result may be studied too well, unfortunately, in the army. Great Britain sends out splendid samples of men to Burma, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, and other Eastern centres. Yet these fine samples of manhood, the backbone and sinews of their country, are wantonly destroyed through inoculation with the putrid contagion to which they are exposed. It is said, and on the highest authority, too, that the British army in the East



as a body, at least, is diseased in root, in trunk, and in branch.

In the old days of British authority in the Far East, the army, the Empire's defenders, were protected from contagion and death by no less a man than that great soldier, great ruler, and great citizen, Lord Roberts. He knew India—and he knew mankind ! He knew, too, the ravages of disease amongst the sexes. To protect the dark woman and the soldier from disease Lord Roberts, then Sir F. Roberts, issued a circular memo. on the 17th June, 1886, addressed to the General Officers commanding the army. It ran thus :

“ In the regimental bazaars it is necessary to have a sufficient number of women. It is important that care should be taken to have them attractive ; they should be provided with proper housing and proper food.”

In furthering these instructions, the officer commanding the Connaught Rangers at Jullander wrote to the assistant quartermaster as follows :

“ The cantonment Magistrate has on more than one occasion been requested to obtain a number of young and more attractive women, but with little or no success. He will again be appealed to, and the major-general commanding should invoke the aid of the local Government by instructing the Eastern magistrate whom they appoint that they give all possible aid to commanding officers in procuring a sufficient number of young and attractive and healthy women for the men.”

This order of Lord Roberts' caused a tremendous outburst of pious indignation. Exeter Hall resounded with the echo of voices raised in pious abhorrence at Lord Roberts' demand for the protection of the defenders of the Empire. Resolutions were carried by the intellectually lame, the halt, and blind of the churches of England. Even a strong Tory Government trembled at the awakening of a thing known to political England as a "conscience." Lord Roberts shrank from the storm, the order was withdrawn, and a free traffic in disease triumphed. The army became diseased. An important newspaper published in India at the time declared that the withdrawal of this warrant of health and cleanliness would be the destruction of the British Army from within, through insidious disease working through every minute of the dark night in the East.

To the mind of reason it is verging on the incredible to see fond and pious mothers rearing up their children, splended ornaments of nature's handiwork, in the fear of God, in the light of civilisation, and then handing them over to a fate from the very mention of which they shrink with horror. Of course, it is only possible through ignorance—that ignorance which imagines that the continent life is no more difficult in the East than in the West. Lord Roberts realised fully the difficulties of enforced continence as well as its dangers and did his best to provide against the evils of free traffic in vice. Manifestly those evils lie in wait for the civilian just the same as for the soldier, and equally it may be said in the present state of public opinion state regulation in the interest of the white man who goes

to reside in the East is not within the sphere of practical politics. There remains, therefore, the present system of concubinage, and exactly what that means can be better explained perhaps by the life drama which was told me by a comrade of the principal actor in it. I give it as I heard it.

“A young man, whom I will call Miles, was employed by one of the big oil companies in their scientific branch of geological survey. He was stationed far in the interior, where the strange, wild and rugged new country was to be prospected and opened up for exploitation by the company. The country was on the fringe of the jungle, where tigers were by no means the only danger to be guarded against. Somebody had to do the work ; and young Miles, who had the credentials of two universities, the courage of the Anglo-Saxon race, with the modesty of a girl, was chosen by the directors to penetrate into the wilderness and open up new fields in the interest of dividends.

“Everybody had confidence in him. Everybody respected his learning and his quiet unostentatious manner. His personal friends greatly loved him. His directors trusted him. One thing alone was feared by his intimates—that his constitution was too weak for the job. However, he undertook to go, and go he did, without ceremony or fuss.

“He soon got to work in the wilderness. In the daytime his life was all right, his work congenial. He had a staff of about twenty coloured servants, who did all the laborious work. The tedium of that work was lightened to some extent by the opportunities afforded of a day with the



gun when game was about or a village needed to be protected against a tiger. But the young man apart from that was interested in his job. He loved the days and loved his work, both were full of incident. It was far otherwise with the nights, however. Once inside his bungalow he was practically alone, alone in an unbreakable solitude. Nothing was heard, inside of the flimsy walls of that wooden structure, but the ticking of the clock and the breathing of a dog that slept soundly in the coolest corner of the verandah.

“Miniature solitude reigned within, gigantic solitude reigned without. No voice excepting that of the denizens of the bush, the screech of the owl, or howl of the she-wolf, came from that great heart of the jungle just beyond.

“At first, while the novelty of his surroundings remained, that solitude was delightful. The mystery of the night filled his imagination. He would have laughed to scorn any idea that he would grow to hate and to dread the loneliness to which he was condemned, or that he would grow to long with an overmastering longing for human companionship. He was a good, virtuous, God-fearing lad, highly cultured, and of a decent family. Harlotry and concubinage he knew were rampant in Burma, but to him both were utterly repugnant. It was against his nature to even think of these repellent subjects. Besides, there was a girl in the Old Country to whom he had plighted his troth, and he imagined that with his memories and his hopes he could, if needful, with his dog and gun and his violin as his only companions face months and years of solitude. In those early days he would spend hours writing

home to the dear old mater, to his eldest sister, and one little brother, full descriptions of the daily events of his life and of the novel surroundings in which his life was cast. To his pater, whom he adored, he would write page after page about the progress of his work and the prospect and potentialities of the glorious country of Burma.

“Then to his sweetheart, the trusting English girl he had left behind him, she to whom he had promised marriage before he left for Burma, he would write dozens of pages, every page burning with the joyous words of affection and the happiness and contentment to be theirs when time worked its wonders and sent him back to England a full-blown man, full of importance and, of course, money ! There can be no doubt that he loved that girl with a pure unselfish boy-love.

“That was the first phase before he began to feel the effect of the East. It passed gradually into the second, so gradually indeed that he was probably unaware of when the change began. One week stole after another, one month gave birth to the next, until four or five—yes, six months—had sunk for ever into the abyss of oblivion.

“At the end of that time a tremendous change was to be noted in him. If you had gone to his bungalow you would have perceived that his gun was hanging on its rack with rusted barrel and choked bore ; that his dog, once a petted companion, was unceremoniously chained up in an outer building ; that papers, old and new, letters, some opened, half-read, and others with the seal not even broken, were scattered about the room in splendid confusion. He had ceased to take an interest in his personal appearance.

It had become too much trouble, and his clothes were dirty, his beard and hair ragged and ill-kempt. He would sit for hours at night on his bungalow verandah, dressed only in the Burma sarong and a dirty old singlet over his body. Thus he would gaze for hours into the long, hot, enervating nights. The mystery no longer attracted him, the silence oppressed him, and he found himself fearing lest some ill would overtake him ere morning ushered in the sun. At times he even dreaded to go to bed, and when he did, it was but to toss and to roll from side to side in a heated and distempered condition. The buoyancy of his spirits had gone, the colour left his cheeks, his eyes became sunken and bloodshot. He looked a nervous wreck. When you add to this a capricious appetite you will realise that his condition of physical health was not altogether what might be desired. In another month or two his condition was visibly worse. He had a haunted look and seemed ever fearful of impending danger. He complained of unceasing pains in his head, and he had a dry, rasping, tenacious cough. He ate little and slept badly. He hardly did any work, except the most perfunctory portions of his job. He started at his own shadow, and lost interest in everything. His employers began to complain of his work. He ceased to write to his mother, his father, his sister, or even his sweetheart, and their letters to him he left knocking about actually unopened.

“On visiting him this was the change I actually found in the once bright and healthy youngster after less than a year of solitude in the confines of civilisation with no white companionship within many miles. I had heard before of



such results, but I was not prepared for the wreck it had brought about on my dear young friend.

“I was almost afraid he had gone too far to be rescued. I had heard of cases of such wreckage that had taken months and months to bring the patient back from abnormal to a normal condition. I had gone out to his station with the intention of getting a little shooting, and I found that I had let myself in for a doctor’s job, and so far as I knew there was only one possible remedy. But that remedy had to be suggested with care. At first even my presence seemed distasteful. He had gone into that morbid state of melancholia that disliked all change. However, after a couple of days he became used to my presence in the house. I gave him some decent food, and a tonic, and so after a while he became able to enjoy a cigarette with me after dinner without throwing it away after a couple of whiffs. I slept in his room for company and fairly chatted him to sleep. Then when there was some signs of reviving mental animation about him I suggested to him my idea that if he wanted to retain the *mens sana in corpore sano* in Upper Burma he would have to make some considerable alteration in his mode of life.

“I suggested company—female company. He refused to consider the suggestion. He was quite certain that solitude had nothing to do with his condition and he was not going to be bothered, especially with women. At the idea of having a black woman in the house he shuddered. He only wanted to be left alone; he required no advice. He hinted I was unduly interfering with his affairs and gave me a broad hint not to delay my departure.

“I saw it was useless dealing openly and squarely with him. His was a case for diplomacy.

“I left him a little better than when I found him, but not much. As I returned home I passed through the local village, where two or three hundred old men and women, girls and children, cluster like bees in a hive. As in the majority of Burmese villages the men were gone forth into the jungle or on the fields to earn money, leaving the control practically in the hands of the village ‘Headman,’ a sort of chief magistrate, a Brummagem Mogul, or village encyclopædia, whose duty it is to keep things straight and in order. Although elected by the villagers, he is responsible to the Government for the proper conduct of affairs.

“I went to see the headman of this village, an old Burmese who knew from experience when to ‘come in out of the wet.’ I took him into my confidence. I told him the story of Miles’s illness, and what I suspected was the cause, and I begged him for his help. The old man’s dark deeply set eyes twinkled ever and anon, as though they were saying, ‘I know, I know! it’s the old, old story, the fight against nature—and nature wins every time.’

“When I had finished, the old man put his hand on to my shoulder, smiled into my face, and said in a half whisper, ‘Don’t worry, don’t worry! The sahib will be all right. Surely it is not good for man to live alone, and why need he?’ He swept his hand eloquently round. ‘There are maidens in plenty in the village. Surely it is better that one should cheer the white man in his solitude

than that his friends in the far land should see him no more.'

"That was precisely my opinion, and after some more conversation I parted with thirty rupees and agreed to pay thirty more when I learned that the prescription he undertook to make up had proved effective. He looked upon the whole business as a huge joke, and his laughter echoed through the tumbledown old building that laughed again at such a simple proposition. Poor Miles! It was no laughing matter. Yet amongst the Burmese, who for their happy dispositions are rightly called 'the bright Irish of the East,' it was exquisitely humorous that any man who could afford it should debar himself a wife.

"Then I went my way. About six weeks later I saddled up my old pony, loaded my rifle, filled my pipe, and headed for Miles's station. I reached my friend's bungalow just as the sun was going to bed in the West, with all its magnificence. It was a golden glory of a sunset, and even as I had left him I found Miles lounging in his hammock on the verandah watching it. There was a difference in him, however. He seemed pleased to see me and greeted me with a hearty handshake, exclaiming good humouredly, 'Where the dickens and the deuce combined did you spring from?'

"He looked better and spoke more cheerfully. Yet he was manifestly not himself. After our first salutations I took the saddle and my valise off, and fed and watered my pony. I was just taking off my leggings when my friend called out, 'Meh Suey! Meh Suey! Bring some whisky and a biscuit.' Then turning to me, he remarked, 'I'm



a d—d inhospitable host ! Why didn't you call for a drink, old chap ? ' I realised then that my prescription was really beginning to work, and I watched with interest to see how my confederate, the village headman, had compounded it. Meh Suey brought the whisky. She was a pure Burmese and very much on the dark side. Her eyes were large, dark, and expressive.

" She seemed very young, for her joints were not yet properly set. It was easy to see that she had come straight from the jungle, for she had a scared look, and entered and left the room like streaked lightning.

" ' Where did you dig Meh Suey up ? ' I laughed. ' Any more in the camp where she came from ? I'm glad, anyway, you have joined the Benedicts of Burma.'

" Miles blushed to the roots of his hair. ' You have made a mistake,' he remarked, a trifle stiffly. ' Meh Suey is simply a girl the headman of the village brought here five or six weeks ago. He seems to be rather a thoughtful old chap, thought the place wanted cleaning up, and said that I must have somebody besides my boy to look after my food. Gad, he was right, too ! I know now what was the matter with me. I was nearly dead with acute indigestion.'

" Whilst he was speaking, Meh Suey bolted into the room and bucked out again like an unbroken filly. She really looked and acted as though she had only been lassoed in the jungle a day or so before.

" I grinned, but I turned my face away when I did so. After all, Miles could call his complaint just what he pleased. Certainly the place looked cleaner and brighter,

and it was equally certain that the dinner which I ate a little later was an improvement upon the food served me six weeks previously.

“ I stayed a couple of days, cheering him up, then though he was not anxious for my departure, I left him. He seemed nervous, as though he were undergoing some mental struggle. I thought it might be better for him if only the jungle witnessed the struggle between his physical and mental needs and his conscience. The girl was there. He had sent her away, so he told me, but she had come back. He looked upon the situation with pure English horror. He forgot that he was in Burma and that he had already heroically tested the lonely life. So I took my departure.

“ In saying good-bye, I casually remarked, ‘ Old man, keep Meh Suey. She may yet cure you of the acute indigestion. Your health is sadly breaking up, you need a mate. She will fill the bill, in Burma. It’s the custom of the country, and always remember—

“ There is nothing either good or bad,  
But thinking makes it so.”

Do not let your brain master your body, nor your passion for pious ideals mar your health. Take the things of the earth that are to hand, use them with moderation, and health’s ensign will again return to your cheeks.’

“ He smiled—rather a grave smile it was—hesitated, and then said slowly, ‘ You are very good, old chap, very good, but I cannot play the hypocrite. The cure you suggest is worse than the disease. Any cure of the body that kills the soul or tarnishes it and thereby strangles self-respect, kills the better part of a man or woman. Yet, yet,’

he hesitated again, 'there is something to be said for the custom of the country. One does not realise until one tries it how the loneliness gets on one's nerves. Yet it seems a disgrace to take advantage of the power and authority one exercises over these simple people. It would be like killing my soul to save my withered body if I were to do as you suggest.' He paused, and then continued with some passion, 'I know the majority of the men do it and think it no harm. Yet—well—there's a girl in England who I guess is trusting in me and waiting for my return. What would she say? There's the mother, praying for me. Looking forward to the day when I shall step into the manager's shoes. To do as you suggest would break their hearts. No, no, my friend, not that, not that!'

"Miles shook his head. 'I wish to God I could throw up my job to-morrow and go to the old land where some sort of decent order prevails. Yet I can't. If I were to chuck this job I should have to begin life all over again, weighed down by the realisation of failure. No, I must play the game. I can't be a hypocrite,' he continued. 'You can quote to me the customs of the country, the dictates of health, the effects of loneliness. But after all a man ought to be able to keep his end up against all of them.' He faltered. 'It's a hard fight, and Heaven knows how it will all end. I thought I was strong enough to go straight where others have not. I still hope so, and if not—well, better death than a living lie.'

"I grasped him by the hand, and I placed my hand affectionately on his shoulder as I said, 'You will do right whatever you do. But your choice of paths is limited.



If you want life and health there are only two paths open to you. Quit the country to-morrow for ever or contract a Burma marriage of convenience. You wrong no one in righting yourself, you can do the right thing by the girl after your separation. First comes your health, your prospects in life, your hopes and your mother's love. Look at the brightest side of life, take the greatest joy the world can give you, pluck the fruits that are ripest in the garden that is nearest.'

"He smiled sadly, and shook his head. We parted.

"Thus I left a good man, a true Britisher, one who was really struggling to do the right thing after the manner of true British teaching and British ideals.

"I left him to work out his destiny undisturbed and unobserved in that lonely bungalow by the fringe of the forest with Meh Suey the pure, the virtuous, good, young copper-coloured maiden, who had no knowledge of civilisation and right and wrong, of virtue or of vice, but was simply a rough, unkempt, uncut, unshaped rugged child of Nature, direct from the wilderness, transplanted as if by magic into the quiet bungalow of a cultured and pious Englishman.

"As I rode home, puffing furiously at my pipe, endeavouring at each puff to keep time and tune with my racked and heated brain, I wondered whether I had done right. I wanted my friend to live and do his bit of work in the world. But I could not help misgivings arising. I had an ugly presentiment that all would not end well in the bungalow I had left. Instinctively I felt that something, an unseen and unknown spirit of disaster, hovered

in the dense jungle, ready to advance and destroy the youth, who was fighting the battle of virtue against the machinery of Nature.

“So far the story of my friend is simply comedy as we see it in the East, but there was tragedy to follow.”

When I heard the end of the Meh Suey episode, I agreed with him, but the conclusion of the narrative requires a chapter to itself.

## CHAPTER IX

### A BURMA TRAGEDY

“ I HAD lost sight of young Miles, and had nearly forgotten him and his struggle with the Yellow Girl on one side and Dame Virtue on the other.

“ I had been away, sent by my Company to inspect oil-fields in Borneo and Sumatra.

“ Borneo is a fearfully rotten place. I got the fever there. Black malaria. The wretched thing is as bad as the name. It paralysed me for about nine months, and I was often on the point of passing in my checks. Borneo is a place ill-governed, ill-conditioned, fully tropical, and with all the plagues of Egypt carried through it from sea to sea by an infernally strong head wind. To any young fellow who is about to go to Borneo—my advice to them is the same as given by *Punch* to those about to marry—‘ Don’t.’

“ Borneo is ‘ no catch ’ : the only thing an Englishman is sure to catch there is Malaria !

“ I had been away altogether some years, close on six, I think, two of which I spent in Sumatra, which is ruled, or rather ruined, by the Dutch. A splendid island is Sumatra, the third biggest in the world. It is, I think, the richest in the world. The Japs are poking their little



noses in there, and if they once take this island, then good-bye to England in the East, and Australia in the South. But that's politics ; let us get on.

“ When I returned to Burma, I found my young friend Miles had been shifted inside. The directors had been afraid that the jungle was killing him, and he was a valuable man. His bungalow now was only a mile away from my own place, and I had not been back long before I rode over to see my young chum. I found him well and happy. He had grown quite fat and chubby. His old waistcoats would have required a lot of letting out to enable him to button them. I never saw such a change in a man. He was delighted to see me, he almost embraced me, and shook my hands a dozen times at least, whilst a broad healthy grin played on his face and lighted up Nature's picture of health. He was all talk and couldn't tell me the history of his success quickly enough.

“ He had made lots of money, barrels of it, all through the old Burmese headman—the old chap to whom I had paid sixty rupees to dispense my prescription—putting him on a tract of country that had been found to produce the best oil in Burma. He told me he had sent a thousand home to his mother and had several thousands invested. In fact, everything he had touched had prospered.

“ Thus he rattled on as we sat over our whisky and soda on the verandah of his bungalow. There were precious few signs of nerves about him. He laughed, chatted, and joked like an overgrown boy, smoked cigarette after cigarette, and had just finished telling me a good joke when two bright little boys, about five or six years old, rushed

headlong through the house to the verandah and bumped against Miles like an English buffer, screeching at the top of the voices: 'Father! Father! A great big snake is in the henhouse, gobbling all the eggs. Come and see it, come and see it! Oh, kill him, daddy, dear old daddy, come and kill him!' demanded the elder boy.

"The younger lisped, 'So big snake, daddy, eat my chicks, daddy; come kill it, daddy!'

"Miles took the younger child on his knee and the elder boy he drew to his side.

"He answered my enquiring look by saying, 'It is the custom of the country.'

"We both laughed.

"I replied, 'A convenient custom.'

"He answered, 'Not a bad tonic for one's health, as someone told me long ago.'

"A moment later Meh Suey appeared at the foot of the verandah steps. She had a large dead snake in a cleft stick. She had killed it. When she saw me she dropped the reptile and in a very confused manner greeted me. I noticed her English was very good indeed. The elder youngster dragged the snake away in triumph to throw it on to an ant bed.

"Meh Suey looked very neat and 'natty.' She had improved wonderfully under the 'development process,' and was no longer the little, shy, innocent-looking copper-coloured girl I had left Miles to break into the ways of the world in his lonely bungalow on the fringe of the forest. She had developed into a fine, healthy woman. I remembered the day when I first saw her, a shy child fresh

from the wilderness. Now, in her silk sarong, her head of jet-black hair artistically fixed with the combs and ornaments of her country, the glow of healthy womanhood on her well-formed Burmese oval face, she looked remarkably handsome. Her teeth were even and lustrous as pearls. Her feet were slippered by hand-embroidered work. Her arms and neck carried gold ornaments, whilst a valuable string of evenly cut jade beads entwined her forehead and hung to the waist. Two large uncut Burma rubies, set after the fashion of her country, served her as earrings. She looked as modest as she was beautiful, and from what I learned afterwards, she was as intelligent as she was virtuous. Her intelligence was vouched by the fact that under Miles's tuition she had acquired quite a fair knowledge of English. She had learned both to read and write, and could already claim acquaintance with some of the English standard authors. Altogether the child of the wilderness had developed into a mate of whom any white man might have been proud—at all events, a very desirable mate in Burma for Miles.

“ ‘I'm so glad you turned up,’ said Miles. ‘Have a Burma cheroot. Meh Suey makes them, they're not too strong, and rather a fair smoke.’

“I took the proffered smoke and lighted it. Then looking steadily at Miles, I said, ‘You seem all right. I suppose your acute indigestion has now completely vanished under Meh Suey's treatment?’

“ ‘Yes,’ he answered thoughtfully. ‘But I've only exchanged one difficulty for another. You see, Meh Suey has grown up. She is a woman and has exactly the same



instincts and feelings as if she had been born in Kensington. She rules me in this house as the Spartan mothers of old ruled their children. She is as jealous as a parson's wife in the old country, and quite as touchy about her honour and her good name. She has full charge of the youngsters and I have no say in their upbringing. She has full charge of my health, my actions, and my work. She tonics and tones me up, and claims me body and soul,' he smiled; 'so you see, old chap, I am in an infernal fix. You know I'm engaged to a nice girl in England; it's simply a matter of honour that I go home and marry her. You advised me before. I took your advice. You see the result. What am I to do now?'

"What could I reply? To me, seeing that pleasant Burmese home, there seemed only one answer, 'You say it is a matter of honour to go home,' I replied slowly, 'but surely it's doubly a matter of honour for you to remain here and protect your children and their mother.'

" 'I don't know. I wish I did,' he exclaimed. 'I will make every provision for the youngsters and Meh Suey. They'll not want, and, after all, we must not forget that this was a temporary alliance.'

"He helped me to some whisky, had some himself, and when we were again seated, I remarked, 'Do you remember your decision of six years ago, when you declared that death was preferable to hypocrisy and that nothing would tempt you to temper your solitude with a native wife. I suppose you've acquainted the people at home?'

"The idea struck him as humorous, for he laughed.

" 'Of course, all of us keep the people at home ac-

quainted with our domestic arrangements. I have done just the same as the rest.'

" 'And now you,' I continued, 'being sound in wind and limb, prosperous, and with your future assured, wish to marry the white girl. What does Meh Suey say to it? What are her ideas as to the provision you propose to offer her? You can put it on to me that I counselled you to marry Meh Suey for your's health sake. Well, you've done so and found the benefit. But if you ask me whether you shall throw her over, I'll not take the responsibility. She is your wife. She has borne you children. There's nothing against her, I suppose? '

" 'Oh, no, no, no!' answered Miles. 'No purer woman than Meh Suey was ever born. She is honour and honesty itself, but, of course, we're only married Burma fashion. I have told her,' he continued slowly, 'that I must go home, and suggested that I will make provision for her. But she scorns the idea. She doesn't want any provision, she simply wants me. She sits for hours near the front door while the children are playing near her, dreaming all the time, and when she looks up it is with a look in her eyes which makes me afraid, not for myself. No, it is fear of hurting her. Confound it!' he added irritably, 'other men, lots of them, have cleared off and closed down their Burmese households without any bother, why should there be any trouble about my doing so.' He paused. 'I'm going home on long leave at the end of the season,' he concluded shortly.

" 'To get married?' I queried.

" He nodded.

“ ‘ Date fixed ? ’

“ Again he nodded assent.

“ ‘ Don’t you think you are pretty well fixed here ? ’  
I asked.

“ ‘ But,’ he declared, ‘ if I break off the marriage in England it will kill my mother.’

“ ‘ If you break off the marriage in Burma it will kill your wife, perhaps your children. These Burmese women are the very devil to shake off. In fact, it is the old saying in Burma that it is far “ more easy to get melted butter out of a mad dog’s mouth than to shake your Burma girl off if she loves you,” and Meh Suey seems devoted to you.’

“ ‘ Seems ! ’ echoed Miles, ‘ seems is not the word. Her love is overpowering. It crushes out all opposition. You see, the devil of it all is, that I was her first love or first something whatever you call it.’

“ ‘ Have you told her,’ I asked, ‘ about your departure ? ’

“ ‘ Not exactly,’ he answered. ‘ I have just hinted at it. The other night, for instance, I intended to make a clean breast of my intentions, but I only got as far as, “ I think I’ll make a trip,” and as a consequence she promptly sobbed herself to sleep. I don’t think there is any law which demands that I should be quietly tied up to this Burma tree all my life.’

“ ‘ No ? ’ I said. ‘ Now that you have plucked the fruit, like a good many others, you are anxious to get another tree to feed from.’

“ ‘ Well,’ he said, ‘ I want to be left alone. I want some peace. I’m no child, anyhow.’



“ ‘ Why didn’t you leave Meh Suey alone when she was a child ? ’

“ ‘ I consider I saved her, anyhow,’ he replied, quite pettishly.

“ ‘ Yes,’ I laughed right out. ‘ Saved her by giving her two children, and an English education.’

“ ‘ She would probably have gone to the devil had I not met her,’ he snapped.

“ ‘ The probability is that the devil would never have heard of her, but for her meeting you.’

“ ‘ Well, I never tempted her. She tempted me, and that’s a fact.’

“ ‘ Her task seemed to be mighty easy,’ I suggested. ‘ Of course, you have thought of where Meh Suey will go when you leave her ? ’

“ ‘ To her people, I suppose. They all seem to have a lot of people about here.’

“ ‘ A rocky anchorage, old man, for a deserted wife with two fatherless children,’ I remarked.

“ ‘ Well, I suppose she has friends,’ he argued.

“ ‘ Friends ! A well-favoured woman need never want for friends, least of all in Burma,’ I replied.

“ ‘ You’re a bit hard on me,’ he said, ‘ but what can I do ? ’

“ ‘ Play the game, and keep Meh Suey as your wife,’ I answered.

“ ‘ I can’t,’ he snapped.

“ ‘ You won’t,’ you mean.

“ ‘ If she were white, I would. Look,’ he said, ‘ here’s a photograph of the girl in England.’ He abstracted from

his pocket a portrait of a slight young woman. I glanced at it quite casually and all I remember is that she appeared to be extremely thin and, I should say, delicate, most unlikely to bear transplanting to the heat of the climate of Burma. Turning over the print, I saw some lines pencilled on the back. I half apologised for glancing as I handed the portrait back.

“ ‘It’s all right,’ Miles answered, ‘I copied on it some lines written by a chap named Symonds—Arthur Symonds—they express just what I have felt.’

“I remember the first of them. ‘As I lay on the stranger’s bed, and clasped the strange woman that I had hired.’ The rest I have forgotten, for I’ve a bad memory for poetry, but I remember it was a sickly piece of sentimentality about loving another meanwhile. I think it was just at this time that I began to feel doubtful as to what the outcome of the business was to be. The man who brings poetry into a Burma alliance must expect trouble. And Miles had scruples as well. He had treated Meh Suey well. That was evident, she might have been a white woman for the consideration he had paid her.

“That’s where he had been unfair both to her and himself. If he had left her as he found her, the dead leaves of responsibility would have troubled neither of them. As it was, he had found that she had a brain of no mean order. He set himself to develop it. He had no thought of the trouble he was laying up for himself in the inculcation of his Western thoughts. True, he was only a sick lad when he found health and happiness in Meh Suey’s arms, but he had done his utmost to win her affection and he

had succeeded better than he intended. It was recognition of this fact that induced me to counsel him to stick to her and never abandon his illegitimate children. To my mind there was nothing for it but for him to settle definitely in Burma and salve his conscience by knowing that he had done right. Really, he was more devoted to his temporary wife than he realised, and I was quite convinced that if he did marry the white woman he would live to regret doing so. You may take it from me, that once a man lives with a Burmese woman a yellow microbe forms in the white's man's blood and keeps him longing again and again until he possesses a dusky maid of the forest.

"I am not a moralist. I've a Burma wife of my own. There's no vice in it, for vices are hostile to nature and nature repels vice with marked displeasure. Nature is pure, and what's natural is not vice. I saw nothing wrong in Miles following the customs of the country. But it did seem wrong for him to desert the girl who was his wife and leave his children fatherless in order to fulfil a pledge which he had already violated. It might be admitted that to break off the Western marriage would have caused much pain. But even there, seven or eight years' absence would have done something to take the smart out of the wound.

"The appearance of Meh Suey with a tray of cocktails stopped our conversation. Miles had taught her even that refinement of civilisation, and the brew was excellent. Shortly after tiffin was announced. Meh Suey took her place in the most matronly fashion at the foot of the table. The children, neat and natty with newly ironed little white coats, were seated one on each side.



“Miles took the head of the table, which was a signal for Meh Suey to bid the elder boy to say grace.

“Miles looked happy and pleased: he was obviously proud of the youngsters and yet he was contemplating deserting them. Meh Suey in manners and appearance was fit to grace any table, and yet Miles was ready to cast her adrift. The conversation was bright, cheery, and chippy; the food was good and well cooked and well served. Any man might be proud of such a home and such pure devotion.

“The meal finished, Meh Suey handed us Burma cheroots, her own make, lighted matches for us, then told us that our hammocks had been taken to a shady nook in the garden where we might smoke undisturbed in peace. There she joined us later, and by her intelligent conversation showed that intellectually she was quite on a par with a white woman, in fact, much more intelligent than a good many white women I have met. Naturally we did not revert to the subject of our morning conversation, and after an hour spent in chat and playing with the children I bade them good-bye. Meh Suey filled my pockets with cheroots and gave me two pots of home-made jam when I left for my own camp, to get ready for work on the Monday.

“Just at that time we were starting to bore for oil in a new country in the Shan States which had never been tested, and my time was very much taken up with the job, as I was responsible to the Company. So that four or five weeks had elapsed before I saw Miles again. When we did meet he told me that he had at last mustered up courage to inform Meh Suey of his intention. She had, it appears,

taken the news very much to heart. She had been passionate and wild, tearful and pleading by turns. When she found that he was not to be moved she had become silent and hardly ever spoke to him. The kiddies were running wild.

“ ‘ You see how it is,’ Miles remarked to me ; ‘ it’s the native nature coming out.’

“ ‘ Human nature,’ I told him, ‘ and under brown skin or white that’s very much the same the whole world over.’

“ But I could not persuade him to alter his determination, and I felt mighty anxious at the new turn of affairs. I think that I told you that I had a Burmese wife at my home. But she was not one of Meh Suey’s sort. She had come to my household for dollars only, and we both looked upon our temporary alliance from the business point of view. She was one of the many thousands in this country that do so and feel no shame and take none for their complaisance. When I reached home after this visit I told her all about the affair.

“ She listened, and then said nonchalantly, ‘ Your friend must go quietly and soon. The evil spirit has entered into her.’

“ ‘ The evil spirit ? ’ I queried.

“ ‘ It enters into women as well as men,’ she continued, ‘ when they are young. If it is allowed to remain,’ she shrugged her shapely shoulders, ‘ it makes them as the wild things of the forest. Better in their eyes is the death of the beloved than that another shall sleep in their bed. He had better go soon. The women of Upper Burma are cunning in the art of poison-weeds. You know,’ she

continued, 'that in the wilderness of Burma many of the weeds are poisonous and among them is one known as the weed of death. It grows in the jungle. For more than a thousand years the mother has told the daughter of its existence. It is a woman's secret—for use in extremity. There is another known as the 'love-weed.' That, too, is a woman's secret,' she told me. It may be potent for its purpose. I do not know, but it is said that cases of sudden madness have been due to its effects. Not often are either of them used. But, according to my informant, sometimes when the maiden finds that her lover grows cold and turns his eyes upon another she seeks the roots in the forest, and if the love-weed fails her, then she administers the stronger brew, since it is better that he should pass to his resting-place for his soul to be born again, than that he should find a fresh mate.'

"I laughed at the idea that Meh Suey would have recourse to love-weeds or death-weeds. From what I had seen of her she seemed to be far too well balanced and had left the jungle ways and the jungle thoughts much too far behind. Still, I was troubled. The parting of those two would need something more than rupees to heal the sore. But what could I do? I stopped away, for I felt angry with Miles.

"Three weeks elapsed, and then one day a lad came galloping to my camp with some half-intelligible message that Miles wanted me at once. Something had happened, somebody was dead, and he had sent for me. I obeyed the summons on the instant, saddling up my pony and starting on the instant forthwith for Miles's bungalow. I guessed



that Meh Suey had cut the knot by taking her own life and that I should find my friend suffering the pangs of remorse.

“Meh Suey, I was to find, had cut the knot, but not in the way I anticipated. When I arrived at the bungalow all was still. Not a soul stirred. I rapped at the open door with my riding-whip for an instant or two. No one appeared. I stepped lightly through the first big sitting-room and opened the door leading to Miles’s bedroom. Then I knew that it was not to console my friend that I had been summoned.

“The worst had happened. All that remained of my friend lay upon the bed. His troubles were at an end, one could see that from the smile which rested upon his pale face—he always had been a good-looking chap—but I never realised how handsome he was until I saw his face in perfect repose.

“‘A bad attack of fever,’ the Company’s doctor told me was the cause. Everything had been done for him that could be done, but the attack had been neglected from the first. He had come forty miles to attend to him—a useless errand as it turned out. I wondered, for there remained in my mind the story which my Burma woman had told me of the weed of death. However, the doctor evidently suspected nothing, and as Meh Suey was evidently overwhelmed with grief it was very difficult to get even an intelligible word from her.

“I had to take the whole burden of the sad business on my own shoulders, and for a time I had plenty to occupy my attention. There’s no need to go into details. The

doctor left me to it, promising to notify the white neighbours, the nearest of whom, barring myself, was half a dozen miles away. In the course of the day three or four of them turned up, and we buried my friend in a corner of his own compound, under the shadow of a big tree, with a wooden cross painted white at the head of his grave.

“When that simple ceremony was finished I went back to the bungalow and devoted myself to putting his papers in order, preparatory to the arrival of his Company’s representative to take charge of his belongings. Meanwhile I saw nothing of Meh Suey. I wanted to talk to her of her plans for the future, but she kept to her room, and I thought that the morning would be time enough. So I sat alone, turning over the dead man’s letters, tying them up in packets and docketing them in a room, the windows of which looked out upon the newly made grave.

“I did not pay much attention to the passage of time and about three I finished my task and thought about getting some rest. I lit myself a cheroot and went on to the verandah where the air was pleasantly cool. The night was a glorious one. The moon had risen in all its Oriental glory, and its soft weird light streamed fantastically through the branches of waving trees and bending palms. The stillness struck my imagination. A wave of pity that my friend should not be there to enjoy the beauty of it suddenly swept over me. He had always taken, like myself, a sentimental delight in Nature’s pictures.

“My reverie was broken by a wail. There was no mistaking it for aught but the low piteous moan of a woman. It was repeated again and again, and as my eyes, wearied

with the light of the lamp, became attuned to the shadows I could see a white-clad figure crouched at the head of Miles's grave. I guessed who it was, and I went at once to the spot.

"Yes, it was indeed Meh Suey, his Burma wife, who had stolen out into the night to pour on her husband's grave the wild lamentations of her race.

"I approached the wretched girl—girl-mother, girl-wife—but she paid no heed. I had never before seen such a wild abandonment to grief and I never wish to see such again. I spoke to her. She seemed deaf. I laid my hand on her shoulder. She did not appear to feel it. Then I heard the words which she repeated again and again in a low monotonous crooning wail, 'I killed him! I killed him!'

"I gave an involuntary shudder as I realised their import. I grasped her and lifted her to her feet. She turned and faced me.

"'Yes,' she replied louder, and with greater energy, 'I killed him. I, Meh Suey, killed him lest he should put me away and take another woman in my place!'

"I do not think I was surprised. I don't know that I was very much shocked. I have lived long in the East, and many things come to be the contempt of familiarity, which would be shocking enough in old England. I realised now that the Western education and the Western ideals with which Miles had civilised Meh Suey had been a mere veneer which had cracked and peeled away under the fierce fire of jealousy and despair. I treated her as I would have treated a native woman who had slain her lover. I



spoke to her soothingly, 'Why,' I asked her, 'do you mourn on the grave of the one you have killed?'

"She turned and faced me. Her dark eyes glittered in the moonlight. 'He was false and was to marry another. See!' She was erect enough now, and it was with an imperious air that she took from the folds of her clothing a photograph and handed it to me.

" 'Read the writing on the back,' she said simply. There was no need for me to do that. I recognised the photograph as the one Miles had shown me. I remembered the lines written on the back :

"As I lay on the stranger's bed and clasped  
The strange woman that I had hired."

"The words sickened me with their salacious unreason. They had proved the death-warrant for poor Miles. It was he who had taught her to understand. You see, it doesn't do to be kind.

"I managed to get her away from the grave at last and back to the bungalow. She seemed to want to talk, and it relieved her to find that I was a sympathetic listener. Really, her thoughts differed in no material respect from those which might have been born in a white woman's brain under similar circumstances. Miles had sworn that he would never forsake her when first she had given him herself in all the passion and tenderness of youth. She had served him devotedly, watched and nursed him through illness, and struggled day and night until she released the grasp the hand of death had on him. Naturally, she looked upon him as hers and believed that no white woman could love him as she loved him. He had repeated his oath when

his first baby was born. Then came his announcement that he was going home. She became suspicious, searched and found the photograph and read the writing.

“She was calmer after a while, but dawn had broken before she went to her own room and left me to try and snatch an hour or two of slumber before performing the unpleasant duty which I foresaw was to be mine on the morrow. I did not fancy the joy of denouncing Meh Suey to the Magistrate for the district, even though my friend had been murdered. Fortunately, perhaps, the necessity was not thrust upon me. When I was awakened later by the frightened crying of children, I found that Meh Suey had solved my difficulty for me, for her body lay in the shadow of the tree which also overshadowed the new grave, and—I’m not much of a Christian—but I do think that there was something symbolical in the fact that her heart’s blood had stained the whiteness of the newly erected cross.

“The kids? Oh, well, Miles’s money provided for them, and they are doing well. I shouldn’t wonder if they don’t make a mark in Burman history some day, for both their mother and father had a streak of greatness in them. That is, if ever the pure breeds will come to admit that the virtues as well as the vices of their fathers and mothers may be reproduced in the Eurasian.”

## CHAPTER X

### A DUTCHMAN'S PARADISE

NO work of this sort would be complete without some attention being given to the other colonising countries in the East—Holland and, more recently, the United States of America. Let me deal with these in the order in which I have named them.

To the casual visitor to Java—the “Gem of the East,” a land of perpetual sunshine and unrestricted lasciviousness—a superficial view of the island and its peoples is cautiously unfolded, whilst the veil is tightly drawn to prevent even a glance into the inner working of the affairs of Java under Dutch rule. The tourist, the globe-trotter, the man or woman with money to burn, knows nothing and cares less about the fearful Dutch chains that enshackle a great nation of generous and simple-hearted people—the Javanese. For Java is a nation, and a great one. This island, perhaps the most beautiful and fertile in the world, supports a population of 35,000,000 souls, but in bondage.

Once Java was a British possession. It was during the Napoleonic war that we captured it, and after the Congress of Vienna we handed it and the adjacent islands to the Dutch. How the Dutch have misruled the island and what tears of blood their rule has brought on a helpless



and defenceless people must be written by a bold pen on another day. At present I can take but a hurried survey of the fearful destruction worked by the Western men on the simple-minded Eastern Javanese.

Java is governed from Holland—a nation suffering from a high state of tension and Germanic dyspepsia. All laws are made in Holland and sent over to Java by parcel post ! Many of them are never taken out of the parcel, and none but those that apply to taxation of the natives or are calculated to annoy the visitor—especially the English visitor—are put into force. The ruling powers seem to be suspicious of foreigners. Every man, woman, or child having the hardihood to enter Java must within three days register their names and pay 2s. 6d. for the pleasure of being registered. If they fail to register and pay the fee the Dutch will enforce a penalty to the extent of one hundred guilders. If a Dutchman lands in London and is charged 1s. 6d. for his portmanteau to be carried to the nearest Dutch food shop he raves and swears, declares he is robbed, and that he will complain to his Government to see him righted. How he would tear round if he had to get a permit to land such as he demands for Chinese merchants going to Java, or if he had to be registered as we register a dog ! The Dutchman doesn't like his own medicine.

The Dutch law makes special sumptuary regulations for the natives under their sway. A Javanese or Malay is forbidden under heavy penalty to wear hat or boots, and trousers are not allowed unless a girdle of cloth is around the waist. Short coats are allowed if they show the waist-

belt, but long-tailed coats are strictly forbidden. Such a brilliant idea as prohibiting by law the owners and toilers of the country from wearing trousers or hat, or indulging in the luxury of walking through the slushy streets wearing a pair of "concertina" boots, would strike anybody but a Dutchman as humorous. The thing seems incomprehensible, but there it is, the law against hats, boots, and trousers—the Dutch law, made in Holland, and transmitted by parcel post for the good government of beautiful Java. It is on a par, however, with the methods of the early Dutch settlers at the Cape in their dealings with the native inhabitants.

In Java the natives do all the work. No Dutchman does any work. Beer-drinking, flogging the native men, and imposing their will on the native women are their pastimes. It is not the custom of the country for the white man to work. No one is expected to work, but rather everybody is expected to not work and live as their humour suits them as long as their constitutions hold out. In the main policy of idleness and lascivious laziness the father sets an example to the son, and the son improves upon his father's example by becoming a terror and a plague to the mothers and maids who are unlucky enough to cross the young Dutch devil's path. The copper-skinned mothers and maids of the nation—the pure-bred Javanese women—are comely, quiet, and even sad. They are peace-loving and industrious, and their one wish in life, I am told, is to be good wives and mothers. They often become mothers in white households, but seldom wives.

As well as the true Javanese, Java holds a considerable

Malay population. The Malay women in Java are more lively, jocular, and mirthful than the Javanese. You can tell them in the street as they laugh and gambol along, happy in their ignorance, and pure in their simplicity and modesty. Yet the silent Javanese woman, delicately framed, and sometimes with beautifully chiselled features, silent and sad, and her more boisterous, yet lovable, sister, the Malay girl, bear an equal share of the white man's burden laid upon them by men who live pigs and die hogs.

Under the Dutch laws, made in Holland, if a Dutchman is convicted before the local Dutch magistrate for some offence against the authorities the magistrate in passing sentence asks the convicted one how he would like to do the sentence. The convicted Dutchman thinks hard, then replies, "I'll be busy to-morrow and Wednesday, on Thursday my wife is giving a party to some friends, on Friday I must attend my mother-in-law's father's funeral. How would Saturday do ? "

The magistrate considers very hard also, and then says, " Well, go in before one o'clock on Saturday and come out first thing on Monday morning ; that will be two days off the time. We'll then see how your affairs stand before fixing the balance of the time ; but, remember, you must do your sentence—the law of our Father in Holland must be obeyed."

This mode of procedure may be considered carrying justice to the " light side," but it's true ; it's Dutch law administered to the Dutch in Java, not to the native or the Chinaman, or, indeed, the foreigner—it's just Dutch law for Dutchmen.



The law ladled out to the Chinaman or the native is short and swift. If the roads used by the Dutchmen for, say, cycling, are in bad repair the coloured policeman "gets the wink" that he must move himself, as the policy of "nothing doing" will not keep the Dutch "law pot boiling."

He takes the hint and promptly fills the lock-up with inoffensive Chinamen and natives. They are tried the next day in a very expeditious manner, and sent out in gangs to repair the cycle roads or to drain fever swamps.

If a servant has a complaint to make to his master he goes to the magistrate about it. The Dutch magistrate listens to all he has to say in a little back room near the gaol. When the servant has finished, the magistrate tells him to go home, be good, work harder, and if he wants him further he'll send for him. The servant departs, pleased, no doubt, that his complaint did not lodge him in prison.

When the magistrate has time he sends for the master of the complaining servant. They chat the matter over in the same back room near the gaol. They smoke a pipe or two, exchange snuff and such-like courtesies, and the master returns home well pleased with the interview. Within a week or two the magistrate sends for the servant, and after giving him a sound verbal dressing down, dismisses him with an effective kick, and has him thrown out into the roadway.

The servant returns to his master much perturbed, and is again kicked for taking the case to court, then finally he is kicked again for losing the case.

No man or woman can enter Java without a permit, and no one—man, woman, or child—can leave the country if they owe a Dutchman money. It's a grave offence in Java to depart without paying up.

The Dutchman in Java is the most easy-going chap alive. Nothing worries him ; he absolutely refuses to be worried. If he can't do a thing to-day without trouble he'll leave it until to-morrow or the following week, or never do it rather than grow a wrinkle.

He opens and closes his shop of business when it pleases him. Generally the shops are opened in Batavia at 8 o'clock, at Soerabaya at 9 o'clock, at Soekaboemi—well, any time when they are not closed. At Batavia, Soerabaya, Soekaboemi, Soeracarta, and Buitenzorg the shops remain open until 1 p.m. and then close till 4 p.m. whilst the Dutchman sleeps off, as he calls it. He will then condescend to keep his shop open until 7.30 p.m. ; after that he betakes himself to the open spaces in front of the large hotels, where easy chairs are conveniently placed around empty beer-barrels on end. Then the drinking and smoking for the night commences whilst the band plays. About midnight the Dutchman makes for his home and the joys of his coloured wife. If a Dutchman is possessed of a native woman or girl of more than passing beauty he will not allow her, for a time at least, to go out into the open. He keeps her in a sort of compound or big yard with mats all over it. In this open space the woman is allowed the services of an ancient serving-maid who massages her limbs to keep them lithesome and, of course, to keep her in health for her master.

Some of these kept native women are thus boxed up for months until they get quite tame and know the whims and wishes and will of their masters. Then they are allowed out, and, indeed, they are lucky as life in Java goes, if, by the time they know something, their places are not filled by some girl who has youth and beauty to recommend her to the master's eye. There are no places of amusement in Java, no theatres, no music-halls; the beer and the band in the open and the houses of infamy in secret are the only diversions for the resident in the towns.

In Java the status of women and girls is at the lowest possible ebb, and if the teachings of Christianity and the managing of a nation's affairs by a so-called Christian country can produce no better evidence of His Word and His work than the Dutch produce in Java, then Christianity had better shut up shop and give some of the heathens a chance. Britain has not much to boast about in this respect, but the Dutch are worse. They make no secret of their policy in dealing with the natives, the owners of the country. They say glibly, "Why should we teach them anything?" "Why should we place them on a level with ourselves?" "They all live to work, not to be taught such sentimental humbug as the English are teaching the Indians—simply making educated loafers and agitators of them. Once you educate the yellow or black races you teach them what you yourself know, but you deny them equal rights with you. You will not marry into their class nor will your artisans work side by side with them. Thus you create a class which is educated, discontented, and forceful against you. Keep them down.



Make them work. Don't allow them to wear hats, boots, or trousers, or, indeed, use the European's manners or customs. Allow no native to sit in your presence. Flog the men and use the women for pleasure and profit is the proper policy for dealing with the yellow or black races."

This policy is carried out with a vengeance in Java. Although one cannot state with actual truth that a recognised state of slavery actually exists, still it does exist under cover of the Government, who permit it by winking at what was done some fifty years ago quite openly. As an example, I clip from the *Free Press* of Singapore the following excerpts which but a short time ago would tend to show that slavery was still openly recognised :

"Voute and Guerin will, at the auction, on Monday, 11th instant, at Rijswijk, sell on account of the estate of the late Mrs. Petel the following slaves, viz. :

"Dantong, aged 48 years, cowherd.

"Pelo, otherwise Constantie, aged 37 years, washer-woman.

"Malative, aged  $17\frac{1}{4}$  years, lady's maid.

"Mochamat, aged  $14\frac{1}{2}$  years, house-boy.

"Antionetta, aged  $13\frac{1}{2}$  years, lady's maid ; and

"Selana, aged  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years ;

"together with an entirely new Brussels-waggon."

The *Free Press* merely quoted from the advertisements of the *Java Courant*, and this was but one of many examples of men, women, and children being disposed of with the rest of the household goods and chattels.

To-day, though nominally slavery is not recognised, a

girl can be bought as a servant for about twenty guilders. She has all the duties of a slave to perform and receives all the whippings a slave usually receives. If she is young, plump, and attractive, she is locked in an outbuilding early at nights to ensure her being kept more secure for her master, or the master's hopeful son ! Many girls are not bought at all ; they are simply taken by force from their parents and supplied to customers or put into brothels at so much per girl, cash down. There is a regular traffic carried on in this way between the keepers of houses of ill-fame and the raiders. One young ruffian was pointed out to me as an expert. He would go out into the forests and into the lonely districts and waylay a pretty Javanese girl and take her away by force. He would carry his prey to a secure retreat where she would remain until the nonsense was knocked out of her, and then he would sell her to the keeper of a Government licensed brothel for ten shillings to a sovereign. I was once informed by a man who knew, that this young ruffian secures hundreds of girls in this way during the year, but nothing is said, nothing done. The authorities are supine and the blood-thirsty young brood of half Dutch, half Javanese, are swift to profit thereby.

In Java the Government openly recognise by licence and taxation the trade of prostitution, with the regrettable fault that they refuse to control the tariff or keep it clean. The trade is looked upon by Government merely as a means of raking in the guilders.

As all the houses of infamy are licensed by the Government and the occupants are blackmailed by the police

some one has to pay, and it is, of course, the frequenter of these dens. From a public point of view these houses only serve as centres for the certain distribution of the most fearful diseases—forerunners to the destruction of the young, and the filling of the hospitals and burying-ground with old and young alike. The opium dens and gambling hells are also licensed by this Christian Government. So long as the proprietors of them and the keepers of the infamy houses pay tribute to the police, any crime—except forging Government notes or coining—may be reasonably excused after a few preliminaries and, of course, a few heavy payments. In a word, your enemy may be destroyed, the innocent ravished, the decoyed girl tamed into submission with the lash, or even killed, without any penalty being exacted. But do not look to the Government for pity if you are caught forging Government notes or coining, for these are the most heinous crimes in the calendar of Java under Dutch rule.

The army of Java, such as it is, is supplied by Government order with girls. This fact is denied by the authorities, but nevertheless it is true. The *modus operandi* is this. A Mandor, or headman, is sent into the country amongst the rice-growers or other of the farming class. He is always well received, hospitality being one of the charms of the Javanese. In the cool of the evening, after supper, the great man talks to the assembled company about the doings in the great city of Batavia or other large cities adorned with Government buildings, of course not calling attention to the fact that every brick of them is cursed with the sweat, the tears, and, perchance, the blood



of thousands of helpless natives. The Mandor's business is to interest the young maidens with fairy tales of dresses, jewels, sweet-scented houses, etc. Once the young girls are deeply interested the fathers' and mothers' doubts are easily removed, for "Is not the great Mandor in the employ of the Government?" A contract is then drawn up and is signed by the girl, her father, and the Mandor. She is then taken with quite a number of other girls, at Government expense to, say, Batavia, and after resting at certain compounds or rest-houses the girls are cleaned up and made spick-and-span for the military inspection. They are then taken to another compound where the Dutch military officers take the pick of the new consignment. The girls that are left are handed over to the soldiers to scramble for. Nearly every nationality under the sun is represented in the Dutch army. No Englishmen, however, are serving in the ranks or as officers.

Thus the work of destruction on the maids of the nation is commenced and continued by the soldiers. The girls are practically in bondage as long as they please the soldiers under arms for a Christian Queen. When the girl gets ungainly or becomes impertinent, or shows any marked preference for any particular man, she is bundled out. Where, Christian people will ask? On to the streets, into brothels, to live a life of shame until death breaks the thralldom of their chains, is the answer. Her place is filled by fresh recruits from the country, all daughters of a helpless nation ruled by a rod of iron by the Dutch rulers. One sees hundreds of young Javanese women, cast off by the soldiers, on the streets in all the principal towns of

Java. In Batavia the number is very large, and the crowding of the unfortunates into the apology for a Lock Hospital is a sight to make a strong man ill.

A well-known doctor at Batavia told me that ninety-five per cent of the women on the streets in that town were diseased and that forty per cent were incurable, and the ratio of deaths through the fatal ravages of the disease was larger than in any country in the known world. Still, the Dutch, I have heard, are proud of their colonial empire.

Besides the number of public licensed houses of ill-fame in Java, ninety per cent of the hotels are open and recognised places for the hiring of native women of ill-repute. At nearly all the big hotels the smug-faced "head" waiter will call upon you in your rooms once your luggage has been sent up, and often before you have time to wash and dress he asks you plainly if you would like a young girl sent to your room to brush your clothes and tidy up. I cannot here repeat the manner in which the "head" waiter will enlarge upon the form and deportment of the maids for hire. Suffice it to say, that if you are foolish enough to acquiesce in his suggestion you run a fearful risk of disease. But the custom is recognised, and acceptance means that there will be a charge in the hotel bill of eight guilders, of which the unfortunate girl gets one-sixth if she is lucky.

The licensed brothel-keeper complains bitterly of the opposition to their trade they have to endure from this traffic in girls which is carried on in the hotels. They not only complain that travellers are supplied on the premises

at high rates, but that boarders are allowed to take native women into their rooms provided they make their entry and exits by the back stairs and pay cash for refreshments and create no disturbance. The hotel keepers, however, are undisturbed by the protests. They are in Java to make money, and if travellers require women servants they can have them, with, of course, all risks. These facts are nauseating, but they should be known. Nothing but prudery prevents an end being made to many of the rampant evils of the East.

For obvious reasons I have but touched upon the bare fringe of the hotel brothel trade in Java, and I have only done so at all in order to show how far a Christian Government can go in the effort to raise revenue. Although one sees so much destruction on every side amongst the mothers and daughters of the nation under the Dutch rule, now and again the other side of the story is told, and it generally shows the woman who gets her own back is a Malay woman. Of all the women in the East the Malay woman is the most faithful, the most lovable, and passionately true to her white master, but the most desperate and dangerous if her anger is aroused. Nothing fires the blood of her bloodthirsty race so much as jealousy. Pity the white man if he takes unto himself another woman of colour and neglects the concubinal rights of a Malay woman, if she has been the white man's first love. The Malay woman will smile, but she will murder whilst she smiles. She will stop at nothing, not even at death to herself and her children, if her mad love drives her on. She wants nothing but death if she cannot get the man



she loves to continue cohabitation with her. Her ways are subtle and show a depth of cunning and design that out-Borgias the greatest of the Borgia poisoners. Thus the man who commences life playing with the Malay fire is often consumed by that which he kindled for the gratification of his animal pleasures.

I have already referred to this trait in a previous chapter, and a very similar example is often spoken of in Java. A noted individual, an official of high standing, took unto himself a Malay woman of rare beauty as his partner in housekeeping. He became deeply enamoured with her and she with him. All efforts to separate them were futile, though strong remonstrances anent his living in open adultery with the Malay woman came from pious Holland, for he made no secret of his domestic arrangements. The woman held him captive and he defied the outside talk of busybodies. They loved in true Eastern fashion—all passion but no sentiment.

At last the Governor-General, in whom the high official was deeply interested, remonstrated in person, but the woman in the case prompted her lover, and he obeyed her promptings and refused to abandon her. To bring him to reason supplies were cut off. Funds became low. At last the man conceived the idea of robbing the Dutch Public Treasury (a heinous offence), to the keys of which he could obtain access. On the night appointed for the robbery to be carried into execution the high official and the Malay woman backed a cart to the Treasury doorway and proceeded to load up the cart with Dutch guilders. When they had put on as much silver as the horse could draw

they departed with the load and buried it in the vicinity of their home. The robbery caused a fearful outcry throughout Java ; indeed, more noise was raised over the guilders than there would have been if the throats of twenty young soldiers had been cut in a brothel brawl. Robbery from the Government is unpardonable in Java. Every effort to fix the theft failed until the Governor-General issued a decree threatening the instant dismissal of all the policemen of colour if the culprits were not brought to book and the missing guilders recovered.

As the native policeman fears nothing so much as dismissal, they set to work. Suspicion was cast on the Malay woman and the high official, but evidence was wanted in the case. Suspicion is enough to hang a poor Chinaman or a Javanese, but it is not enough to arrest and charge one of the governing class. A Malay policeman thereupon hit upon a highly ingenious plan. They sought to interest the high official in a young Malay girl of more than ordinary beauty. She was called " The Virgin of the Village," and many men had tried to captivate this dusky maiden, but with no success. The high official listened to the whispers of the policemen's friends about the girl's love for him, and his vanity was touched, that vanity which is one of the devil's best assets. Vanity was in this case very helpful to the discovery of the thief. A meeting between the high official and the " village virgin " was arranged, and as the girl was shy and coy the man was at some pains to assure her of his attachment. Whilst he was doing this the Malay woman, the official's wife *pro tem.*, was induced to go to a place of vantage where she

could watch her lover and partner in the robbery make love to the village maiden.

The sequel is short. The Malay woman's blood was soon on fire. She disclosed full particulars of the theft and followed her arrested lord as he was marched off to gaol. She had triumphed and so had the Malay policeman. She was then importuned to complete her good work by stating where the cartload of silver was "planted." She willingly showed the spot where the guilders were buried, and when all the coin was carted back to the Treasury the woman was arrested as an accomplice in the robbery and unceremoniously thrown into prison. But she cared not. Prison was heaven to her so long as her lover was not with the village maiden. After innumerable delays endeavouring to find a loophole for the high official to escape, they were both convicted. The man finished his sentence in a salubrious suburb of a town in Holland. The police allege that the Malay woman committed suicide, but public opinion declares that the hand which took her life was not her own.

I only give this case to show the love of a Malay woman and to what extremes she will go to satisfy the deadly passion that jealousy arouses in her blood.

Another case is told in Batavia where a white man—a business man in a prosperous way—had been living with a Malay woman in an unauthorised union. All went well until the white man wanted to marry a woman of his own colour and nationality. Then the trouble came. She would not leave him. Not heeding his friends the white man, in anger, and with many fierce imprecations, drove the



Malay woman away. On the arrival of his wife, a Dutch girl, the Malay continued to mourn the loss of him she loved.

She waylaid him in a thousand places and implored him to have pity on her, but the white man only laughed. At last, to rid himself of her importunity, he threatened police imprisonment and the like, but his friends, scenting trouble, begged him at least to make some provision for her. But no. He was a Dutchman. He would not be afraid of any coloured she-devil, and would do nothing but defy her.

His wife knew nothing of the old love affair with the Malay. She was all happiness in the joy of her husband's love, and the day arrived when she was in that state in which the name of woman is most honoured—she was about to become a mother. Her husband was happy and proud in his pride, and considered himself a good man because he paid his taxes and his debts. What more can the world claim for a good Dutchman?

One day when the "great event" was expected the Malay woman met the white man by design. The interview was stormy and ended by the Dutchman losing control of his temper and striking the temporary wife. The woman fell in the roadway. The Dutchman went to his office and soon forgot the incident. When he returned to dinner that night his young wife lay dead, poisoned by the Malay woman, who had gained access to the kitchen and prepared the coffee for the servant boy to take to his mistress, and the deadly potion was swift and sure. It sent the beautiful young wife to where, let us hope, she found peace and

purity, which are so absent in Java. The Malay woman escaped to her people in Penang, where no Dutchman dare follow her.

Incidents such as these might be given to fill this book, but all begin and end much the same—a mad love, poison, and death. They are weekly occurrences in beautiful Java, where it is the custom for almost every white man to have his woman of colour. Indeed, some old hands who are already married to a Dutch white woman keep one and sometimes two native women without even apologising. These native women are called the master's "Nursesey." They are very handy in the house, good with the needle, kind to children, and obedient to the master's wishes not to make it a love affair with him—the heavy Dutchman hates the word love. With them it is a home and a comfort. Many of them bear children to the masters. These youngsters are generally christened and roped into the fold by the pious Catholic priests or nuns.

Every raw young Dutchman who comes to Java is considered as an "upstart" if he doesn't settle down and take a Javanese woman as his 'dictionary'—a term for the native wife of convenience not, however, common to the Dutch—to teach him the language of the country while he teaches her civilisation up to date.

One must not imagine, however, that all the Dutchmen desert their coloured wives. It is not so. Thousands marry in one form or another the native woman and settle down to a life of ease, and see their "pepper-and-salt" children grow up in numbers. The Javanese woman makes a careful wife and mother. She is loyal to her husband

before all things, and is intelligent and thrifty. Some of these women are very fascinating. They are most delicately framed, having small hands and feet. They have large dark eyes and their lips have a healthy red glow and their teeth are generally good. Hundreds of women at Batavia reminded me of the well-known painting of the Queen of Sheba on a visit to Solomon. Other delicate faces remind one of Anne Boleyn. Indeed, if these Javanese women were pure white they would be considered beauties in any European city. Many of these women have ample means to keep their white lord. Some inherit estates or the savings of their ancestors, and money is always a great incentive to the Dutchman who wants peace and quietness with, of course, a plentiful supply of beer, tobacco, and snuff, with easy chairs in cool corners. Your Dutchman in Java is not a man to worry. He knows nothing and cares nothing of politics. He rarely reads the papers. The world can turn upside down so long as Java remains intact and the beer supply is not exhausted.

Another class of Dutchman lives with the yellow-skinned Javanese woman because he likes her. She can better administer to his physical comforts than the white woman. The native woman is an adept at all the tricks of keeping her white lord in her meshes. She knows all the love potions that fire the sensuality of the blood. She can administer a drug in her white lord's coffee that will make him very endearing to her. But the real secret of the animal attachment many white men have for the black women in the East is that their blood is hotter than the white woman's. A half-caste girl, a saffron-skinned woman,



or a pure black woman's blood runs at fever heat in her veins compared with the cold white woman. The heat creates passion that administers to the animal craving of the white man; hence his attachment to the girl of the East. Then at times you will find in your wanderings Eastward white men who would gladly break the bonds that tie them to the black woman, but they are afraid. They know their women, and their own doom is plainly written if they desert a determined yellow woman and her children, so they hang on and more children are born. Thus the chains are more securely riveted, and until old age creeps on, then it is too late to repent. So they remain.

The Malays of Penang told me a story of a magistrate of Java falling in love with a pure-bred Malay girl from Penang and its consequences. It appears that a band of Malay strolling players went by deck passage to try their fortunes before the footlights at Java. There were about a dozen members of the troop, including four matrons and two very pretty Malay girls. Both these young girls sang and danced on the stage after the fashion of their own country.

The Dutch magistrate came to the entertainment just to see that it was not a seditious gathering. The Malays being so honoured, brought much beer for the gentleman of the law and invited him to a private view of their company in the green room—a tin shed attached to a tin hall through which the wind howled and the rain spat. The magistrate accepted the invitation and enjoyed himself in the young ladies' company in the green room, with, of course, the inevitable beer. After one or two visits the worthy

magistrate fell in love with the brown-skinned *prima donna* of the company, but the lady with the voice had ideas of her own about love. She declined the magisterial proposals, alleging that the magistrate was too fat. The Solon of the East thereupon shut the show up and imprisoned the strolling players as idle vagabonds. Still the maid refused to yield to the administrator of the law. *Billets-doux* were sent within the prison walls, only to be returned unanswered. At last the magistrate packed the whole of the company off on the first outgoing ship to Penang.

When the party arrived at the latter town they told the story of their disastrous trip to Java. A council of elders was held and the magistrate marked down for Malay vengeance. Time wore on, but the Malay vendetta remained unsatisfied. They watched and watched every incoming boat from Java for eighteen months. At last the joyful news reached them that the magistrate was coming to Penang to try a rest cure. The rest cure in the East is, by the way, greatly favoured, as it is in the West by people who never toil sufficiently to get really fatigued.

The magistrate arrived at Penang. He was fat, and flushed, but walked poorly. A rickshaw was provided for him and another for his luggage. He instructed the rickshaw boy to hurry to the E. and O. hotel, but the boy had already received his instructions from a Malay in waiting and took the magistrate down a side street and there in open daylight a gang of Malays dragged him out of the open rickshaw and beat him unmercifully, so much so that he was for many weeks in hospital. The Malays of

Penang still gleefully tell their tale of their justice on the magistrate. It was their only means of getting even with a brute who administered rotten law in Java.

Really, of all the countries in the East Java is the worst governed. A hydra of avarice is crowned by unparalleled sensuality. Nothing is pure, nothing is safe. There is no law excepting that of the strongest against the weak. The Press is muzzled, and its boldest writers put into gaol, and the highest flight journalistic imagination may take is to write dissertations on the weather or the goodness of the Queen of Holland and the occupants of the pulpits of the Dutch. Some day, perhaps, the occupants of those pulpits will awaken to the necessity of preaching fair treatment to the natives of the colonies. But so far there is no sign of any such awakening. Everybody and everything under the hand of the Government seems to be palsied. Everybody is hurrying to get rich before the Dutch rule of the most beautiful country in the world ends, and the end is closer than most persons will allow.

But it is not my purpose to enter here into the international position of Java or lift the lid off the hidden volcano the Dutch are resting on in slothful sensuality. I may do so later, for Java would undoubtedly be a great prize for an invading force. Nor would the feat be difficult or dangerous, since a country sunk in sloth, in which only sin is naked, unabashed, and unashamed is not going to make much of a fight against a clean attack from the most awakened nation of the Far East.

Finally, to close this chapter, let me give a short account of an interview I had with a Javanese woman. She was a



true descendant of one of the country's greatest patriots. She lived near Batavia in great seclusion. I had some difficulty in gaining access to her, for she kept herself strictly from all contact with the whites, whom she blames for the destruction of her country. But after some little persistence I managed to get a native interpreter to take me to her house. On my arrival she said sharply, "Why do you come here? I am told you are English. Is it to see what you English have done for a helpless and defenceless people?" She relapsed into silence, then she continued in a minor key, "You English are hypocrites. Why did you hand us, like cattle, over to the Dutch to be destroyed? What right had you over our lives? Are all our hopes, our bodies, our lives, to be destroyed by the Dutch monster because it suited the convenience of your nation? Did your God give you the right to trade away the lives, the bodies, and the souls of a nation of people who had never harmed or molested you?"

By the time this initiatory piece of invective had been translated to me she had begun again before I had time to make any reply.

"I know of the teachings of your priests. Are they not the same as our Dutch masters? 'Thou shalt not steal.' Why, nothing is here but what is stolen. A nation has been robbed, and is now in chains. Its labour is stolen day by day and hour by hour.

"'Thou shalt not kill!' The white men kill the youth of my nation daily, some quickly, some slowly. Have they not without shame in the sunlight shot to earth helpless women with babes at their breasts. Truly, in the

eyes of the Dutch the man of Java is but a creeping insect and of none account, to be killed for sport. And my people bear it silently. It will not always be so. Truly we trusted the white man when he came, for he treated us fairly. Then came the other white men and we are made a nation of slaves.”

I explained to her that the English were not to blame, that the man who gave Java to the Dutch was in reality the agent to the devil, and after cutting his country's throat, had cut his own ; that he left his accursed mark on everything he handled, and poor Java was not exempt.

For some moments she was silent. Then she began to talk more quietly, and I learned a good deal of the hatred which is felt by the native Javanese for their Dutch taskmasters. I learned, too, a great deal of the fatalism which makes the Eastern races so subservient to a masterful white man. She was herself instinct with the spirit of revolt, and were many Javanese imbued with her spirit the day of the Dutchman would be short in Java. The reason I learnt from her own lips. Her husband, a chief of importance, had met his death at the hands of a drunken Dutchman. She had three children, girls. Two of them were taken from her by force, and after ministering to the passions of their abductors were cast off and had passed through the hospital to the grave. As she told the story her frame shook with emotion.

While we were talking a door on the right opened and a younger woman entered. She embraced and fondled the elder woman, and I rose to depart, but she stopped me with a gesture and a few short, sharp words.

“The woman would have you look on the face of her daughter,” said my interpreter.

Even as he spoke the elder woman drew the younger into the full light of day. The face might have been beautiful once, but, alas ! it was seamed and seared with scars. The elder woman, with a still fiercer gesture, stripped off the garment that veiled the younger woman's shoulders and bust. Here, too, all shapeliness had been destroyed by some terrible accident. I asked my interpreter for an explanation. His answer in its impassivity was in striking contrast with the elder woman's dramatic gestures, as she replied to his translation of my enquiry.

“The woman says she burned her daughter with fire that she should not find favour in the eyes of the Dutch.” Then he added, “She would have you tell the people in your own country that here in Java it is the only means by which mothers may save their children.”

Not everywhere in the East is the embrace of the white man looked upon as an honour and the privilege of becoming a wife of convenience eagerly sought.



## CHAPTER XI

### AMERICAN UTOPIANISM IN THE EAST

THE possession of the Philippine Islands and the control of eight millions of people of conglomerate races of the human family by America away in a far-off corner of the Far East, is food for thought and conjecture to the man who cannot see everything through the rose-coloured glasses of our enthusiastic friends across the Atlantic. The policy of America in the Philippines has been characterised, and justly so, as the most fancifully Utopian and absolutely the most impossible known to history. The Philippines are to the Americans simply a playground where the game of nation making, theory propounding, ideal spreading, and morality teaching—by precept, not example—goes merrily on. The pious folk preach and pray, but the old Adam will not be ousted as the animating principle of the people.

When the Islands came into the American fold after the war with Spain, that good man, President McKinley, told the world that he sought aid by way of advice from all sections of the great political parties of America, but none was forthcoming. Then he appealed to a higher power than selfish man. I'll use the President's own words :

“ I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance for more than one night. And one night it came to me this way—I don’t know how it was, but it came : (1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonourable ; (2) that we could not turn them over to France or Germany—that would be bad business and discreditable ; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there, worse than Spain’s was ; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilise and Christianise them, and, by God’s grace, to do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the Chief Engineer of the War Department (our map-maker) and told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States ” (pointing to a large map on the wall of his office) ; “ and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President.”

Thus America was saddled with a burden in the Far East that may ere long cost the nation far more than the tens of millions of dollars that are being poured into the island—her humiliation as a great power.

Mr. David Gray, a noted and worthy exponent of Philippine affairs, says :

“ Like all Malays, like all the tropical races, the Filipinos are in a condition, racially, of child development. As to matters which children can comprehend, they are precocious, but face to face with adult problems of Western civilisation, they lack self-reliance and initiative, and that energy of character without which popular liberty, as we understand it, is impossible. A most significant and discouraging fact is that few, if any, Filipinos of prominence are pure Filipino, but are mixed with Mongol or European. I was not able to meet or hear of a single Filipino of exceptional force or distinction who was not more or less obviously of mixed blood. In most cases capacity and success are traceable to the genius of the Chinese, which seems to be a natural admixture of the Malay, resulting in a superior type. The Chinese blood in Mabini and in the native judges of the Supreme Court is conspicuous.

“ The people of the country impress one pleasantly. They have many attractive traits, but few vices. They are by nature peaceable, justice-loving, and for the most part law-abiding. Their domestic lives are clean, but politically they are babes. They have neither the capacity for, the conception of, nor the desire for self-government as we understand it. The *presidentes*, or headmen of the villages, often make admirable executives, but the *presidentes* would gasp at the suggestion that the peasants were entitled to equal rights guaranteed by our constitution.

“ They need education along all lines ; they need development. The cost of educating them and developing them may be heavy to the United States, but we have put ourselves in such a position that we cannot morally



withdraw from meeting it. The argument that we are undermining our own democracy by ruling paternally an alien people is nullified by the obvious moral requirements of the situation. It is not a question of what we should have done, or what we should like to do, but of what we must do. To give them independence for the purpose of cleaning the blood from our hands and whitening our good name would have the same merit as to abandon an illegitimate child in order to put away the evidence of sin."

Mr. Gray here presents only the best side of the Filipinos, and he depicts American missionary work from the high ethical point of the moral maxims in the school copy-book. He does not to the man in the street present one peep into the inner life or the under-the-surface working of what goes on in the Philippine playground.

The religious sects are up in arms against the power and privileges of the old religious orders of the Spanish friars. The ferocity with which some of these divines expound the virtues of their particular brand of faith and belief and condemn the vices or alleged vices of the old order under the Catholic friars must be highly interesting to the lazy Filipinos, who are always ready to be "saved," but never ready to go to work.

Thus Bishop Brent says :

"No one but a blind partisan seriously denies any longer the grave moral laxity that has grown up and still lives under the shadow of the church and *convento* (parsonage) in the Philippines. Inch by inch I have been forced back by the pressure of facts from the position I originally held

that there was a minimum rather than a maximum of immorality. The cumulative testimony that has come to me has been chiefly incidental and unsought, containing in it the witness of Roman Catholics in good standing. When the new hierarchy with American honesty sets to work seriously to discern the whole state of the case, I can imagine from my small experience that they will have an unsavoury and anxious task.

“ It is considered to be no special discredit to either party concerned—certainly not to the man—if a temporary contract is entered upon between a man and a woman, to be terminated when expedient. A man may, according to this *mal costumbre*, have even more than one *querida* without transgressing propriety, though a woman must abide faithful, as long as the contract is in effect, to the one. It is unfair to jump at the conclusion that such a lamentable practice has grown up because the country has been under Roman Catholic rule. The question, however, may be justly asked whether Latin-Christianity has honestly grappled with it. The answer is found in a fact. Many—I use the conservative word—many Filipino priests have a personal lot and share in the *costumbre* under discussion, either in its less or its more revolting form. Their grown-up children bear witness to the long continuance of the custom. I know one old priest who lives openly with his wife—for that is what she really is—and family in the town where he has served, if my memory is accurate, for more than a quarter of a century. I have no reason to suppose that his ministrations are not acceptable to his flock—and yet the common folk

believe that a lawfully wedded priest would, *ipso facto*, be incapacitated for the priestly office! How much of this enormity was indulged in by the friars themselves I do not know. But as one of them, whose character was *sans reproche*, said to an army chaplain, 'I believe that there were *some* good friars.'

"No doubt the Church has, in the past, spasmodically struggled with this besetting sin of the Filipino. But in spite of everything, by degrees its filthy stream trickled into the sanctuary, and apathetic quiescence in a seemingly hopeless situation ensued. A council for the reorganisation of the Church so far as possible along American lines has been summoned by the archbishop, and an effort is being made to secure the aid of the American priests, thus far without much success. I believe that the American archbishops and bishops in the Philippines, nearly all of whom I have met, are the types of men who would be as shocked as you or I at what they see. It is, peradventure, their desire to mend matters. But their hands are tied by the ordinance of a council of A.D. 1059 which in the long run, and broadly speaking, has been a failure. What the Philippine hierarchy should be free to do, according to the principles of justice and honour, is to relax the rule of a celibate clergy locally, to pronounce the Church's blessing on every priest who has been and is faithful to one woman, and to excommunicate *con amore* those who have various *queridas*. The question is not one of doctrine, but of common morals, which strikes at the root of society, and in which every citizen is concerned.

"Again, it is all too common to find the parish priest



an accomplished gamester. The stagnation of tropical life, the absence of other amusements than the *baile* and a mild game of ball played by the men, make the prevailing excitement a powerful temptation to the least viciously inclined."

The worthy bishop's remarks must be taken *cum grano salis*. The fact being notorious that the divines in the Philippines are rivals for the privilege of converting. The "heathen" do not love each other with that Christian charity of brotherly love He taught in His ministry on earth.

Another peripatetic divine tells us that "America is like John the Baptist making the desert a highway for God," but the analogy is not obvious. St. John did not openly allow concubinage or fan unrestrained lust, or remain inactive whilst a race of illegitimate children of every caste and colour was being produced. I think St. John lost his head for denouncing unrestrained lust; however, every religion gets a fair chance in the Philippines under the American rule. We find the Catholics, as established under the friars of Spain, and the Independent Catholics, as established by the revolutionary fire-eater "Aglipay," cutting at each other and sparing not. The Independent Order of "Aglipay" winks at its priests living in open concubinage, and these gentry of the new order enjoy such diversions as cock-fighting, gambling, and opium smoking. The very independence of the Order gives it a big following. The modern Filipino readily takes to religion provided it pays or better his condition

in this life ; he has a strong aversion to “ post-dated cheques on eternity.”

All religions in the Philippines will flourish on the surface as long as the pious folk abroad “ stump up the dollars ” to keep them going. The Filipino doesn’t object to being termed a “ heathen ” or to being converted provided the subscription list for the conversion is good. The Filipino will readily build a church with funds from abroad, while he takes tips from the brothels at home or holds the stakes at a cockfight or a gambling den on Sunday, with a complacency that bespeaks a very elastic conscience. It’s quite orthodox, according to Philippine ethics, for a Filipino priest or parson to own one or two wives and a numerous brood of copper-coloured offspring. The main curse, however, of the Filipinos is that once he is half educated he become so self-important that work of any kind is degrading and distasteful to him. He wants fine dress and leisure, and if he cannot secure idleness in any more convenient way he adopts the religious ticket as a means to the end in view.

The young robust American fresh from the States falls into the life as though to the manner born. He likes the easy-going morality and quickly takes to himself a coloured girl as a concubine, perhaps two. Her wants are few, her complaints are nil. She considers herself “ elevated,” whilst the American does not deteriorate in the social scale by his mode of living. The children to the unauthorised union of convenience do not worry the father or mother. The missionaries or the State will not allow them to starve. So the path to illicit intercourse is made very smooth and

easy. Shame and modesty as we in the West know it is unknown in the Philippines. Men and women bathe together quite openly and enjoy the fun. A known concubine is openly acknowledged as young Mr. ——'s girl, and passes as such under Society's smile. If a man kicks his old girl out and takes a younger one the incident attracts no notice. It is an everyday occurrence.

While in Manila I chanced to meet a young American whose acquaintance I had already made in Australia. He is, or was, a dealer in live stock, and it was in this respect that our acquaintance commenced. He was delighted to meet me again in that corner of the earth, and was splendidly hospitable and full of desire to show me about ; full of information, knowing everybody and everything that was worth knowing. Naturally I made full use of his services, and he showed me a good deal of Manila—called by some enthusiasts the "Venice of the East." There certainly are points of resemblance, not only in the canals with their stone steps from the streets to the water's edge and the huge floating population—about 20,000 persons live their lives, idle for the most part, on barges, boats, and all manners of craft—but also in the plethora of churches.

On the third day of our inspection we visited the famous walled city—Intramuros. It is a well-fortified place, well fortified also with churches. I never saw so many libraries, churches, and convents in such a small place. I am told half the land of the walled city belongs to the Church.

I was very much interested in the Jesuit Church with its fine carvings in wood. It has a splendid library of very



rare books. I was very loath to leave such delightful evidence of art and learning.

On our return from this visit my companion offered to take me out to his hut or bungalow, where he lived with a black partner in congenial concubinage. He knew I was out for information and very generously refused to place the seal of confidence on our chats, only enjoining me not to mention names. I there and then accepted his offer and we jumped into one of the rambling street railways with its ultra polite and particularly dense copper-coloured conductor. The distance was not great, and leaving the tram at the outskirts of Manila a walk of about three hundred yards brought us to his hut—a little four-roomed bungalow with verandah front and back. Entering the gate, which creaked upon its rusty hinges, we passed along a rough-kept path with straggling flowers on either side to a large hospitable verandah.

My friend rapped at the door with that authoritative knock which signifies the master. There was a shuffling of feet, a splashing of water, and a cry of “Dadda, dadda, oh, mine dadda!” as a big woman, a thoroughbred Filipino, opened the door and smiled a welcome with a broad unstinted grin which lighted up her face and showed to advantage her rows of white and very even teeth. I followed the head of the household into the front room, where he embraced a copper-coloured youngster—a boy of about five years of age—as he stood in a wooden tub in the centre of the room before being put to bed for the night. The youngster was a pleasant-faced kiddie and seemed in raptures at his daddy’s approach as he stretched out his

brown arms, calling again and again for "mine dadda, mine dear old dadda !"

The Filipino woman checked the youngster with a gentle pat and exclaimed, "Hush ! Hush ! You bad boy. Do you want to wake baby ?" and she broadly grinned as she turned her large dark eyes on me in a friendly fashion. She was fat in the face and full in bust and hips. Her features were massive and open, her skin a dark, dirty brown, her eyes and hair as black as the raven's wing. She was dressed in rough European costume, but no boots troubled her feet and no stays girdled her generous waist, around which was tied a variegated bundle-handkerchief. She had the expansive features of the Mongolian, but in her blood I think there was a mixture, remote perhaps, of Spanish blood crossed with the early pure Filipino. It may have been of the Portuguese "dip," certainly there was nothing of the gentle Malay, the delicately framed Javanese, or the aristocratic Burmese in her. She was coarse in the extreme : repulsive, I should say, to the white man, but there, she was the heavy, bulky and greasy-looking black concubine of a well-formed, sprightly limbed, and intelligent American. It was a strange combination of white and black in a country where such anomalies are the rule rather than the exception.

She dusted a chair with her coarse linen apron for me to sit upon and proceeded to finish scrubbing the child, then, taking the youngster on her lap, she proceeded to dry his body with her apron, and that finished she carried him into the adjoining front room preparatory to placing him in bed.

The black woman's absence gave me an opportunity to look around the room, which was poorly furnished, if it could be called furnished at all. A square pine table with a gaudy coloured oilcloth covering occupied the centre of the apartment, for the rest of the furniture there were three or four rickety chairs and several whisky boxes with red chintz tacked over them to make seats, a cupboard in the corner on which an American clock ticked, a basket of gaudy paper flowers was on the table, on which several religious pamphlets from the Baptist, the Wesleyan, and the Protestant missions lay. The walls were adorned with very cheap and trumpery pictures in frames without glass ; the subjects were for the most part religious, showing in flaming colours several biblical incidents. The floor was bare and greasy. Of the two back rooms one acted as an eating-room, the other as a lumber-room.

I asked my friend what religion his wife *pro tem.* professed.

He replied, " Oh, Independent Catholic, it's the easiest of all the religions. I am a strict Presbyterian when at home. Out here, well, a man's anything. There's a wide range of choice. But although there's a mighty lot of preaching the practice is small. The only brand that doesn't do well out here is the Salvation Army, because they are continually on the make. Well, that doesn't suit the Filipinos. If they can't make something out of it, religion is of no account to them."

At this point the woman returned and the master of the house ordered her to get some whisky. She produced a bottle of the favourite American Rye-brand, and taking



two tumblers from a cupboard in the corner she washed them in the tub which the youngster had lately vacated and proceeded to wipe them with the apron, which seemed to fulfil the general function of towel and duster. She then produced a can of water from the back room and placed the whisky in an inviting position before us. My friend helped himself, but I declined. Whisky and I had long parted company and I did not wish to renew its acquaintance when it was mixed with soapsuds, but my American friend was not so particular. Apparently he enjoyed the beverage, and enquired after the baby. He was told that it was asleep. He motioned me to follow him to the bedroom and proudly showed me his second. He gently lifted the mosquito net, and there in peaceful, happy sleep rested a fine copper-coloured youngster ; indeed, it was almost white with a slight tinge of red colour in the hair. The babe was a girl about a year old, sleeping as peacefully as any child in its silk-curtained cot in a Broadway mansion, quite oblivious of the stormy life before it.

“ What would be the life of that baby ? ” I thought. Brought into the world under the libertine system that was openly adopted in the country where the flag of the greatest civilised country in the world proudly flies. Would the fates protect it through childhood to keep it safe for some fearful work in life where its sex, caste, and colour would offer it up as a prize to the lascivious instinct of the white man of the future, then to die as millions of its sisters have died, and fill a dishonourable grave ? Who can say ? The poor kiddie was one of the children of the East, born

not of love or righteousness, but as the results of the animal instincts of the white man in the East, where the environment of the surroundings and the custom of the countries offer opportunities that nature has no power to resist.

As we left the house on our return journey to my hotel I asked my American friend why Americans who wished to make their homes in that part of the world did not bring their wives with them or get women from their own country.

He laughed outright and gave the casual reply, "Who takes a ham sandwich to a President's feast?"

I answered that to me there appeared to be nothing of a banquet in his *ménage*.

He became serious and agreed that the proposition was not refined or elevating and replied, "What are you to do here? This is no country for a white girl, and our occupation casts us here in the midst of women as 'cheap as old boots.' Many refuse the life of concubinage and make good resolutions. Well, they are like most resolutions, when the whisky is in, and the results are rather detrimental to health. Concubinage is a safe proposition so far as the white man is concerned; that is from the eugenic standpoint."

"But what of the children?" I asked.

"Well, I admit the coming of the copper-coloured youngsters is a bit annoying, and the Filipino woman will produce them. It's her religion, her love, her hope. The more children she has, the prouder she becomes, though she is the worst mother in the world to bring children up.

Do you know that according to the register three-fifths of the <sup>more</sup> children in the Philippine Islands in 1903 died off the face of the earth, and now, in a normal condition, far more than half the children born in the islands pass out in the infancy stages? Yes, the infant mortality is very great. The full extent of it is not known because only half the illegitimate children are registered. Thousands are not registered at all, while thousands more die as soon as they are born."

"But what is to become of those half-breeds that do live?" I asked.

"Well, that is one of the problems of the future. It will mean work for our American sky pilots. Take away the work amongst the heathens in the East, the reclaiming of the lost souls and the disputations of what we are to do with the children of the illicit intercourse between a white man and a black woman from some of our American 'goody goodies' and they'll break up, sure. The youngsters must take their chance. Every man who fathers children in a black country cannot be expected to carry the burden all his life. There is no sentiment in these unions, they are purely for convenience. They suit the women and suit, for a time at least, the men. When the parties in the contract wish to break from each other, well, they do so. It may, in some cases, seem to be a bit rough on the children, but most phases of life are rough."

"But," I urged, "what is the attraction in the first instance for a clean white man to mix up with a repulsive black woman. I can understand it in the case of the nice and dainty Javanese maiden, the beautiful Burmese girl,



or the laughing Malay. In those instances one can muster up excuses and blame the environment, but it's almost beyond belief that a white man well gifted by Nature should seek the embraces of an ugly Philippine woman who is slop-made, bulky, ignorant, and dirty."

"Well," he laughed, "they are the best one can get. It's no use talking of dainty Javanese when there are none here. That woman who minds my home is loyal, true, and a good worker. She requires nothing beyond what I choose to give her. I come and go as I please, but she is always at her post. She obeys me as a faithful dog would its master. I don't trouble with her cooking; I generally take my meals out, and if I am absent on business she keeps all my papers in order. I know that when I want to break this life with her she will do what I want, and for a small consideration take herself and children back to her native village and there await some other white man, or, if she has money enough, she will marry one of her own caste and colour. You see, we Western people are infernal hypocrites. The fact that that woman has been living with me only injures her in the eyes of the Western people. She doesn't consider herself injured at all. They know nothing of the ethics of love and sentimental bosh like that; it's an order of convenience established for the mutual benefit of both parties and so long as the white man plays the game decently no one is injured, so who should complain?"

"The children," I interposed.

"Oh, the children again," he replied. "Why, every copper-coloured youngster is far more proud of his white

father though he does not know him for sure than any full-blooded child is of his black-coloured papa.

“ You people who write and preach don’t understand the East,” he urged. “ If you were as young, as healthy, and we’ll say, as vigorous as I am and your life was cast in this hell on earth, Manila, where everything is the opposite to what it is in the West and your pay at your business was moderate and you honestly wished to live a proper life, how would you commence to do it ? You would go to reside at an hotel, and that one act would gobble up your pay and teach you all the tricks of whisky drinking and having a good time in houses of ill-repute where it would cost you ten dollars to ‘ go up the golden stairs ’ and goodness knows how much after for doctor’s bills. Hotel life in the East soon crumbles you up. You cannot resist the temptation of a loose life once you have lived in an hotel. The fast set haunt them ; they live outward clean lives, but lift the veil and you’ll see the fashion of such a life as will make you shudder.”

“ But,” I answered, “ is there not specially provided temperance houses built for the express purpose of keeping young men away from the evil temptations of hotel life ? ”

“ Yes,” he said, “ but a man of my temperament would cut a sorry figure at a temperance hotel run on hypocrisy. Why, the devil himself laughs and is glad at the work that goes on in some of the Eastern temperance hotels. In these places the stingy young cubs that sing religion in the daytime spend their nights hovering around to catch the poor shop girl—the helpless Eurasian. Their fine clothes,

evening-dress and glib tongues help them in their quest amongst the innocent and help to bring young girls to ruin. Apart from this, many of these Christian homes for the good young man in the East have convenient back stairs, every step of which is well worn with the traffic of the black or yellow girls' feet. No whisky is for sale in the Christian homes, but it gets there all the same in the bottle by the back stairs, and the black servant is quite an adept at furnishing his young master on the quiet with creature comforts.

"Hypocrisy lives in some of these Christian houses in defiance of the good intentions of the management. I think it is more honest and more healthy to adopt the common custom of the country and take a concubine. I know the mere mention of such a life will shock the sentimentality of the dear old folk at home ; I am sure it would kill my dear old mother in the Western States if she knew I was hitched up with a woman of colour. I was like most of our strict church-going folk, brought up very strictly, but forms and customs of youth, even God Himself, is soon forgotten in the East. The only way to avoid the life is to 'dig out' and quit it. All cannot do it. I'll do it the moment I can."

"Tell me," I said, "how do you account for your youngest child being so fair, with almost red hair ?"

"Oh, that youngster," he replied, "has, I think, thrown back to my grandfather, who was very ruddy, one of the old Scotch puritanical caste. The strength of the male line has certainly come out in that youngster."

"Well," I urged, "you cannot surely leave that little



girl behind here to become in her time a concubine, if nothing worse ? ”

“ I can’t take her with me. What do you think the whole district would say if I returned to our family with a yellow youngster and asked my pious sisters and old mother to bring her up as a relation in blood, with, of course, the black ‘ dip ’ in it. Please don’t be silly. The youngster must with many thousands of its kind take its chance. Let us have a drink and cut sentiment. The East is no place for sentiment, and to moralise is to go daft.”

He had a drink, we lighted our Manila cigars and strolled along the almost deserted road on the way from my friend’s home with the black woman and his children. After a while we parted with great cordiality. He was a good sort of American, but tarnished with Eastern customs. From him I got an honest opinion which I have set down as I received it.

A very knowledgeable American in Manila remarked to me once :

“ We seem to have a pretty tough proposition here, what with the pious folk at home screeching out to educate the Filipino, Christianise him, and make him an example to the coloured world. The more we educate the more agitators we gather into the fold. The American intention is good, but I am afraid the effect of good intentions in the Philippines will spell failure.”

It is not only that precept is so divorced from practice in sexual morality. A strict law prohibits opium and other death-dealing drugs to be sold or used, yet these drugs are

smoked and sold as openly as tobacco is in London. Graft is the mainspring of business.

One New Yorker was pointed out to me as a leader of opium importers. One ship's consignment is got through in the lining of open safes, another in parts of machinery, and one consignment came from Singapore as "canned apples." All sorts of simple devices are adopted to get the drug in, but, strange as it may seem, if an outsider were to try and do what the grafters do almost openly he is caught at the first attempt and of course punished. Bribery and tips are the custom of the country, and hardly anything is done without a consideration fee being paid.

In other respects the Philippines are like the rest of the East. Though the islands boast of the number of churches throughout the land, they are equally well studded with houses of infamy. Some of these are very pretentious and correspondingly expensive. Usually they are conducted by some notorious American "missus" or other. Occasionally German and French prostitutes find shelter in these houses, at Manila especially. Of Manila, indeed, it is said that for every church erected three brothels are opened. Disease is rampant in almost every section of the community. In the poorer sections of the Filipinos it is appalling. Yet nothing is done by the Government to deal with the evil. At least one would expect the open scandal caused by the presence of loose American women to be dealt with by the authorities. American prostitutes should be banished from the islands *in toto*, for already the Filipinos are declaiming on the subject. Besides, the example set these people of American women

living in great style on the proceeds of their hire is far more damaging to American prestige than the old story of the alleged black wives of the Spanish friars was to Spain's reputation. The Filipinos are apt pupils in all that is idle or vicious, and if they have before them the fearful example of gay women living on champagne and chicken by selling their favours to Americans or travellers they wonder why they cannot do the same even on a less pretentious scale.

It is not an easy problem that America has to face in the Philippines—that of making clean and industrious and of civilising a miniature nation of all the castes, colours, creeds, and vices. The true Filipino has vanished long ago, and the crossbreeds of Spanish, Chinese, Hindoo, Japanese, Portuguese, Koreans, Siamese, and Polynesian blood, with a slight sprinkling of the Dutch, have taken his place. It is on this unhealthy mixtures of bloods (although a travelling divine publicly assures us the mixture of the bloods of the Filipinos and the Chinese produce a fine sturdy race) the American has to test his up-to-date civilisation methods. But they will be of no account if the ruler cannot win the respect of a people which as a whole are the greatest hypocrites, liars, thieves, and licentious and lazy brood of humanity in the known world.

The administration of the islands is under the control of the War Office at Washington, and barrels of money are being spent in fortifications, improvements, etc., in the same manner in which Russia spent millions in the East, Port Arthur, Dalany, etc.

Will the results be the same? Japan is close at hand.



She is all powerful in the East. She hates America with an inveterate racial hatred. She now smiles complacently at America's efforts at civilisation in the Far East. She is steadily pouring into the islands her trained soldiers under guise of labourers, planters, traders, servants, etc. Some day those Japanese patriots may form an active army for Japan to strike America from within. Diplomacy, or Japan's alliance with Great Britain may stave off such a contingency. Let us hope so ; but at the moment I don't think it will.

## CHAPTER XII

### WHY ?

IN any discussion of the question of the readiness of the Western man in adopting the morals of the East it is only natural that one should look to the causes. Some of those must be perfectly obvious from what I have already written on the subject. Neither climate nor environment is such as conduce to chastity in either male or female. I know perfectly well that there will be some persons who will be prepared to deny the existence of anything like general immorality. I have heard residents in the East absolutely refuse to believe what any man who is not wilfully blind can discover for himself in a few days without any difficulty.

In the discussion which took place in *Truth* on this subject one gentleman stated that :

“ Writing with twenty years’ experience I can confidently say I have not heard of twenty Europeans living with native women. There is no doubt that in isolated and remote districts some do take concubines, but even among such men it is not common. . . .”

Another planter of seventeen years’ experience thought that such statements gave an “entirely false and mis-

leading view of tea-planters and the life they lead, and one calculated to give much uncalled-for pain and anxiety to parents and friends at home, who are unaware of the true facts of the case. I do not for one moment say," he continued, "that concubinage does not exist, but when it does it is carried on surreptitiously, is not common, and, most emphatically, not as a correspondent states—managers acting as pimps for their assistants, handing over to their assistants their discarded mistresses, etc.—in other words, living a degraded and most revolting life. This is a disgraceful libel on a hard-working community. . . ."

But such witnesses are completely overborne by the testimony of those who frankly admit the existence of the state of affairs described. Some of them are sufficiently free from hypocrisy to defend their actions. If one calls attention to the subject they ask: "Why don't you tackle the rich men who keep mistresses at home instead of us poor devils in the jungle? We live for nine months in the year alone in the jungle, and never see a white man. Who is going to look after us and nurse us when we have fever? . . . You ought to realise the conditions of life in Burma. Burma is not a white woman's country. Half-caste children are generally brought up as Burmans, and are not in the least like Eurasians. . . . Girls who have lived with a European are much sought after by Burmans."

And what the white settler in Burma would say would be repeated by anyone who has lived in the Middle or Far Eastern countries. This defence, however, begs the whole question as to whether it is an evil for the white



man to cast off his Western morality when he is compelled to settle down in the East. On that room there should be no point for doubt. Yet in saying that the thing is an evil one need not pass judgment on the men who are parties to it, nor use a puritanical standard of morality. Those who condemn without knowing the circumstances would probably follow the same custom if they lived in the East. Nevertheless, when we think of the position of the children and the relation of their father to them the results are evil. It is difficult to believe that they are otherwise to the women : while as for the men, an Englishman who has lived in concubinage from early manhood in the country where this is a prevalent custom must be in some degree the worse for it if he subsequently returns to his own country, whether to marry and raise a family or not.

Granting that for the European in a tropical country continence is neither possible or expedient, the question at once arises of his duty to marry. But to marry whom ? For the young man who goes to the East to plant tea or rubber or bore for oil or any other task a white wife is in his early days an unattainable luxury. Here is unimpeachable testimony on the point from a well-known resident of Singapore :

“ I have been in the East for twenty-five years, and can speak from experience, as I have been in Burma, Siam, Federated Malay States, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, China, also Australia, the whole of Europe, including Russia. To put the subject in a nutshell : The modern white woman is

not a blessing to the enterprising man or the planter out East, unless the man has money safe and sound : then marry. The European woman will never adapt herself to the local condition of things. Being a white woman she must keep up her position. That means servants and expenses and trouble, which make a bachelor tremble to think of, especially in a place like Singapore. The wife cannot control the servants, and it follows that the husband cannot control his expenses. When we bring up our girls so that they can live a frugal life and be a help and not a hindrance to a poor struggling man in London, or sweating in a Burma jungle, we then can purify the morals of the East.

“ The average pay out here is from a hundred and fifty dollars upwards. Now a planter gets one hundred and twenty-five dollars for a start, and in five years he may be manager, or he may have to start again owing to his estate failing. At present, of course, we have the rubber in full swing, but that also may collapse ; so, you see, a planter's life is very uncertain, and he is foolish to entertain the idea of marrying a white woman till he has money saved.

“ Now comes the question : In his loneliness what is he going to do ? Personally, I say have a ‘ temporary wife.’ These matters are nicely managed all over the East. But should he contemplate getting married to a white woman after making his pile he should be very careful to pack his temporary wife off, buy her a piece of land, etc., and give a bonus for wear and tear, and say good-bye, as he is going to Europe. He had better see that she is miles away, and

not in the same district as the white wife, or else God help the white woman ! . . .

“ All these troubles can be prevented if the white woman will stoop down, or, I should say, if Society will allow her to live happily with her husband on a small pay, till such time as he can afford to spend more as his pay increases. Then he will not feel, as he now does, the need of the temporary wife. Every white man would like to have a white wife, but the over-education of the white woman and her longing for pleasure and dress frighten him off, and he adapts himself to the condition of things in the jungle. In time he is happy with his animals, vegetable garden, fowls, and perhaps a hobby, so why change ? Why should he ? An ornamental European woman is a useless, expensive misery. Again, supposing the estate is large, the manager a bachelor, and only one of his assistants married, and the wife a pleasant and attractive woman. The husband is favoured by the manager, and in time—well, here you have another danger of married life for a young man on an Eastern plantation. Again, supposing there are two women on the estate. Those two white women will be the biggest enemies and will cause no end of mischief, to the great dissatisfaction of the management. No wonder one sees in advertisements ‘ Wanted—so and so—no married men need apply.’

“ For all those reasons the wisest plan is to let the bachelor keep his temporary wife until such time as he has saved enough to select a woman who will be satisfied with the position he can give her, and as a husband he must be a diplomat at all times.”



This is a wholesale indictment of the white woman which is not altogether warranted. It is, indeed, hard on the English-bred woman to accuse her of frivolity and extravagance, and then make this the excuse for men's immorality and all its results. Undoubtedly when a man contemplates marriage in the East the expenses involved are sufficient to make him tremble. The amount required to make it possible for a man to marry, and be at the same time free from the worries of making ends meet, is appalling ; but these expenses are not entirely caused through the white woman's frivolity and extravagance. Men have themselves to blame for the existing state of things. Take, for instance, a bachelor in Singapore—or any place in the S.S. or F.M.S.—on a salary of anything from three hundred dollars. He joins a “chummery” and engages his own personal servant. This servant will demand an exorbitant wage which is granted without question, and this individual will remain just as long as “master” keeps his eyes closed to the squeeze that is being put on him in everything. The cooks in these “chummeries” get probably seventy-five dollars or more per head to run the mess, and out of this they will make a clear profit of half this amount for themselves. So long as they are run fairly well a bachelor won't trouble in the least to find out whether he is paying fair prices or not. They pay their servants anything they like to ask, and allow themselves to be cheated wholesale.

Year by year food, house rent, everything becomes dearer, and this is mainly the fault of the many well-to-do bachelors who, rather than have worry or be bothered with household details, will pay anything that is asked.

The result is that when a man marries—let him choose the most level-headed and sensible girl in the world—if his wife attempts to keep down expenses and try to pay market prices for food and stores generally, her life will not be worth living. She will have to put up with insolent, untrained coolies for servants, she will be boycotted, and her home will become a misery to herself and her husband.

Twelve years ago it was possible to get a good head boy for ten dollars, but the bachelor, in order to be served well, paid twelve dollars, until this price became general, and servants refused to go out under this sum. To-day it is difficult to get a good boy under twenty dollars, and in the native States men pay as much as thirty-five dollars and forty-five dollars. Naturally these natives won't come down in their prices to accommodate a man who wishes to get married, so that marriage becomes quite beyond the pocket of the ordinary low-paid assistants, whether they be planters in the jungle or clerks in mercantile offices or banks in the larger towns.

It is quite likely that there are many nice women eager and willing to cut down expenses and live within reasonable means, and only too desirous of saving their husbands from heavy expenses, but those who do have a bad time.

It is not women's frivolities and extravagances alone that makes the East too expensive for men to marry them ; the men's own desire for luxury and comfort, without care and worry, is an equally powerful factor. Women in the East are often just as ready and willing to meet inconveniences as men, though at the same time they are quite capable of joining in such pleasures and frivolities

as may happen to be going on around them. There are many women leading lonely and almost solitary lives with their husbands in the jungle who have many hardships, who think nothing of it, and are quite content to get home perhaps only once every two or three years. And I am sure there are hundreds of nice, even if over-educated, girls in England who would make excellent and good wives to Western men in the East and keep them straight, and who would cheerfully share the hardships and loneliness of jungle life without frivolities and extravagance.

Granting that this is the case, it does not of course apply to the younger men who, full of youth and vigour, go out at small salaries. In Assam, for instance, the lad who goes out as a tea planter may get from 125 to 175 rupees (monthly). Out of this he has to procure an outfit, in some cases furnish a bungalow, and keep himself alive. Of course, if he likes fowls of the native india-rubber kind and rice with a few potatoes as his staple diet he ought to feel extremely happy. Everything else costs absurd prices, e.g. a half-pound tin of Crosse and Blackwell's jam, fourteen annas (1s. 2d.). He may also get a pony allowance of twenty-five rupees a month, but as he has to keep a syce, a grass-cutter, and a pony out of this magnificent sum very little is left at the end of the month. He may also have to pay for all or the greater part of his servants, and he will find his average monthly bill come to about thirty to forty rupees in this respect. This excludes the use of a decent cook, a man most youngsters cannot afford. They have to suffer for this later on. Then there is the club and subscriptions to gymkhanas. There has



also to be added the almost yearly trip which malaria obliges a man to take and which will cost him no less than fifty rupees a week, for the volunteer camp expenses.

There is no margin here upon which to support a white wife, and when it is remembered that the native wife costs very little more than an additional servant the temptation is obvious. Indeed, the ready adaptation of the Western man to the morals of the East is largely the outcome of the system under which young men are sent out to Farther India. A contract is generally made for three years, but the employee never gets his leave before five years are up, and if he does so then he is lucky. In fact, I have heard it stated that the oldest and largest companies usually dismiss their employees after four and a half years or so, giving as a reason that their services are not suitable—a discovery only made after that time. Thus the company saves the nine months' half-pay during leave, and the employee has to hang about India until he gets another billet, and signs on for another five years. Therefore, having left home under the impression that he may get back after three years, he actually only gets home after ten. He returns, and probably finds his brothers and sisters grown up and married. Friendly ties are broken ; he loafs about through his leave among utter strangers, and goes back feeling lonely and sick at heart. But even then the solace of taking a white companion with him is forbidden. In some companies the assistants who get married, or even engaged, are immediately dismissed ; in others, even managers are not allowed to marry.

Every year advertisements for young men appear in

engineering and other papers. These are loaded up with promises. Polo, tennis, sport of every kind is dangled before the youngster's eyes. If he only knew what he was going in for ! His pay for the first two years is inadequate to keep him. The motherly company advances the money he wants, and thus has a grip over him for three years. As soon as he has repaid his advances he is liable to instant dismissal at his superiors' whim. I have heard of one instance of an assistant being dismissed in the height of the season, when it would be almost impossible for him to obtain a billet. Too proud to ask for hospitality from his fellow-planters, he went to live for six months in a native *bustee* (village) which had been cleared out by cholera. Here an English missionary found him one day, and the superintendent of a big company took him to his bungalow, but after a few weeks the man was dead. The company, his employers, pay an annual dividend of 25 per cent, but could not even spare the £30 to send the poor fellow home.

In view of facts like this it seems superfluous to put the blame on the shoulders of the white woman at home or of the white man in the East. Such a contention would apply equally at home or in any part of the world to men of limited means who cannot afford to keep wives in luxury and idleness. If married life is more expensive in Burma and Malacca than at home, the obvious answer is that in that case employees should be paid in proportion. That European wives are out of place in the "jungle" one can readily understand ; but a married man need not be always tied to his wife's apron string, nor is it necessary

to insist that every employee shall be required to marry. The point seems to be that the desirability of marriage should be recognised, that employers should pay their men a sufficient wage to enable them to marry, and that all possible arrangements should be made to suit the convenience of a married staff. The conditions of the case also suggest that mere boys ought not to be taken into service in the East. Soldiers are not sent to India under twenty. There must be equally good reasons against lads being engaged any younger for hard work in Burma, Malacca, or Ceylon. And as they are not under the discipline of soldiers, it would seem desirable on moral grounds that they should not go out under twenty-one, at least.

The matter is one of much more than local concern because it affects the credit of the British name in the eyes of natives we rule and in the eyes of foreigners who may sit in judgment upon us, that one of the results of British rule and British influence in semi-barbarous countries should be the creation of a large population of wretched fatherless, half-caste children. I say nothing of the degradation of the native women, because the apologists of the system deny that the women are degraded—even assert, as may be seen from the statements quoted—that their social status is elevated by the honour conferred upon them. Granting that the consequences to the women are a debatable point, there is no room for two opinions about the condition of the children.

On this question the attitude of the white man to his offspring fills the mind of the yellow man with amazement, as well as his general treatment of all questions of sexual



morality. Fortunately while I was in Penang an excellent opportunity was afforded me of obtaining an unprejudiced opinion on the whole question of the Englishman's morality from a young educated Chinaman. I met him at a Chinese wedding to which I had been invited and had attended from curiosity. He proved quite the most interesting incident of the affair, for he was one of the young Chinese reformers who had been through seas of trouble in his patriotic zeal for reforming his country. He was a fugitive from China's political justice, resting at Penang amongst friends, sheltered and protected by their hospitality, with the British flag in the background.

He was a particularly engaging young man, full of knowledge and thought, painfully reserved and quiet. I had heard of his reputation previously and had been made acquainted with part of his history and his aspirations on behalf of China, so I was glad of the chance to chat with him on Chinese political topics. He was, if not shy, at least cautious, and, I suspected, suspicious. He evidently did not trust the stranger.

On taking my leave I asked permission to send him next day a little book, which I told him I thought he would find specially interesting. He smiled a permission and accordingly I sent him by a messenger the "Life of Frederick Liszt," one of the greatest of German patriots. Some days later he returned the book with a note asking me to take tiffin with him.

I did so and found him a different man. He had cast off his European manners and his English stiffness. He was dressed in the Eastern fashion, wearing a long sarong

with loose flowing jacket, a head handkerchief, and silk-worked sandals protecting his bare feet.

He greeted me most affably, informing me that the little book I sent him had given him the greatest pleasure to peruse. "What a great man Liszt was! Poor Liszt," he said, "his was the fate of nearly every reformer who sees into the mystic depths of the future."

Somehow the book had found its way to his heart and it proved an "Open Sesame" to his reserve. We were soon engaged in an animated conversation, and on the subjects which particularly interested me I afterwards made sufficiently full notes to enable me to give the gist of what he said, if not always the exact words.

In the first place he told me that he was a pure Chinaman, born and bred, though educated out of China. "I confess," he declared, "that if I were not a Chinaman I would love to be an Englishman. So there you are, my friend, one point for you off my bat."

"I was educated in England, or rather, Scotland," he proceeded, "and took up the work of reforming China through love of the land that gave birth to my forbears—prompted by the splendid example of peace, freedom, and equality set to the world by Great Britain. I am much in the East, as you know, perhaps, and am constantly doing something to further the aims the reformers have in view. Even if one is out of China one can do much amongst the Chinese to advance the interest of China, and China to us is what Heaven is to you Christians.

"We all, young and old, rich and poor, who are in exile, strive unceasingly to get back. Once a Chinaman, always

a Chinaman. We may emigrate from China in numbers to distant lands, live there, thrive there, make money and friends in the remotest nooks of the earth, yet we are only birds of passage at best. We all want, sooner or later, to return to our country.

“ Every Chinaman the world over has this one national desire nearest his heart, to return to China alive and pay his respects by the tombstones of his past generations—or, if the gods deny him that infinite mercy, well, his bones are returned to the land of Confucius.”

I asked him out of sheer curiosity whether the Chinaman would, like the Sikhs or the kindred Indian races, ever be likely to become properly British subjects and take up arms for the defence of the British Empire ?

“ No, no,” he said. “ Dismiss the idea. Chinamen like Great Britain. They enjoy its rule, trade with its traders, make money under the British flag, but no Chinaman looks upon himself as more than a passing guest in any land but his own. In the event of any war the visit would end, most of the Chinamen would pack up and be gone ; those that must of necessity remain would not fight. A Chinaman is accustomed under all circumstances to mind his own business, and it is not the business of the Chinese to declare for one side or the other in the event of any quarrel as to the ownership of the islands in the East. We live here and trade here because the conditions suit us, but we will not spill our blood nor squander our health in quarrels which are not part of Chinese affairs.

“ We have only one empire to defend. That empire is China. We all believe in Britain’s greatness, her honesty



of purpose, and power to serve ; but I repeat again, once a Chinaman, always a Chinaman. China belongs to us and we belong to China."

On the subject of the ethical and moral code of the Chinese he dilated at some length.

"China was not to be judged by Western standards," he urged. "Every nation has its own standard of morals, and certain things that take place in the East in broad daylight may appear hideous crimes to the man of the West. The Eastern man," he asserted, "is not conscious of any immorality under circumstances that may appear strange to a Westerner.

"Your codes of morality in the West have much to recommend them," he admitted, "but does it follow that the people of the East should abandon practices that have been in vogue for centuries and have given joy, contentment, and satisfaction to millions on millions of persons who are not overburdened with the good things of this earth? We must all give and take. They must take, and do take, the best of what is going. The Eastern man of coloured skin looks upon his sad pilgrimage through this planet as :

The flower that smells to-day to-morrow dies,  
All that we wish to stay, tempts, and then flies.

The Eastern men of our race drain all the pleasures and joys that are in life. You Westerners give us the reputation of being sexual monomaniacs, but there is much method and system in our madness.

"If a Chinaman marries a woman and requires one, two, or three unauthorised wives and can pay for them, he

simply obtains his wish if he is in a position to do so, and why should anyone say him nay ? ”

“ But do you consider this desirable ? ” I asked.

“ Why not ? ” he replied. “ It is living within the pale of the law of nature. It is only utilising the power of man to the limit of its capabilities. The women of all unions, authorised or unauthorised, are well treated, treated as mothers of Chinamen, the children are heirs to the great kingdom of China—we never forget that. If a child is born under these conditions, that child at once belongs to the great family of Chinese, properly provided for, and knows and acknowledges its father and mother, lives and prospers in the brotherhood and sisterhood amongst the members of the biggest family on earth.

“ You and your law of morality—pardon me being plain—would disgrace that child, place in its young heart and mind the burning brand of a false shame. You possibly give the children born under the circumstances out to be nursed. If they live, the nurse gets nothing but curses ; if they die, a fine present is her portion ! A premium to murder to save your faces, under your code of morality.

“ Why should that innocent child be murdered, or live a life of shame because it is the issue of an unauthorised union which you are too moral to acknowledge ? The child was not consulted. It was the innocent result of the pleasures of its parents. It is one of the members of the human family. We are taught that it is our sacred duty to protect that child that it may grow, thrive, and prosper in the land, to honour its father and mother and work for

the good of its country. That is the vast difference between our and your moral code.

“ One of your great men—I think it was Lord Rosebery—once told you to ‘ first wind up your watch ’ and also to verify your quotations. You Britishers are all heart and mind, but you are still the greatest hypocrites on the face of the earth. When it comes to discussing what is moral or immoral in the light you are shocked ! Yes, I speak to you plain facts. But in the dark you are far more immoral than we. Insatiable immorality seizes you in your beloved darkness. The proverb, ‘ Men love darkness rather than light, for their works are evil,’ applies in full in regard to the morality of my good friends the British.

“ You have courage to conquer nations ; indeed, your courage in most things is proverbial, but when it comes to dealing with questions of sexual intercourse or grappling with the problem of sexual diseases, or openly and broadly acknowledging your illegitimate child, your courage evaporates in the air. To get rid of your illegitimate child be it white, half white, black and white, or copper-coloured, you will face any dangers or adopt any irreligious subterfuge. A sort of mania urges you to destroy the evidence of your natural power. It seems curious to us that morality should permit of your being ashamed of those who should live and take your place when you are gone, as sons or daughters of the empire. Your Scripture says, ‘ What man is there of you, whom your son will ask for bread and you will give him a stone ? ’

“ Let me reply, Every one of you, if that son is what you call illegitimate. It is only when the aforesaid son



is conceived within lawful and society-branded sheets that he gets the bread. Therefore, my friend, 'wind up you watch before attempting to handle ours.' We want no missionaries to teach us our duties to our children.

"Our nation increases its numbers fast, and there is no brand of shame imprinted on the young lives of the newborn. Your nation is fast losing the capacity to increase and grow strong. Most of your cradles are empty, and you would rather see them so. Yet, when a nation ceases to increase and multiply it has already commenced its period of decadence which must sooner or later cause that nation's fall as it caused the fall of Rome.

"China encourages child breeding. A woman who teems forth in China is blessed by the gods, and her children are embraced by the nation.

"A barren woman in China is looked upon as an unclean thing, possessing many devils.

"You remember your old English nursery rhyme :

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,  
She had so many children she didn't know what to do.

"This applies to China, whose women folk don't know what to do. Unfortunately for mankind, generally most European women do know what to do, and do it effectually, with the assistance of scientific assistants. To me it seems the beginning of the end of the white nations.

"In China, obedience is one of the great injunctions impressed on the minds of the young. Everybody in China is obedient. Obedience is the mother of success, the wife of safety. The wife is obedient to her husband—she is his, body and soul. The 'concubine'—as you term

her—is obedient to her master, the master obedient to the authorities. Perhaps I am a bad example of the doctrine since I am in revolt against them. But the reform of ideas will not disturb the settled conviction of the nation. The Chinaman will always find someone to obey.

“A disobedient child in China is looked upon with greater abhorrence than a murderer is on your highway.

“Yes, we have bad women in and out of China, especially out. We believe in the old proverb, ‘There is nothing more evil than a bad woman, and nothing has been produced better than a good woman.’ One of our ancestors said, ‘I hate a learned woman. May there never be in my abode a woman knowing more than she should know.’

“In old China the saying went, ‘There is no evil so terrible as a bad woman.’

“Bad women we have : but these are openly regulated, for disease such as prevails out in the East is almost unknown in China, except in the foreign settlements. If your desires prompt you, you buy or rent for a stated time a girl who acts as your servant or handmaid.

“She knows her place, and keeps it. The loose women with tattered bodies and crushed morals are not popular with Chinamen, in China or out of it. These women are not producers of members of the human family. Healthy children are not born of diseased bodies any more than ‘grapes will ripen by the rays of the moon.’

“Our system in China in dealing with this problem is that every man is at liberty to marry a wife, or maintain as many concubines as he can afford.

“In the East the system amongst the blacks and whites is bad. Disease and death have a firm hold on the countries of the Eastern Archipelago. It is, indeed, so bad that a man or woman who looks for virtue in the East, seeks ‘wool from an ass,’ and realises that he or she is pursuing a phantom. The false modesty of your rulers is much to blame. The one evil—the greatest of all evils in the countries governed by you—is the unrestricted licence to spread disease.

“You do not realise how it is sapping your national vitality. Perhaps some day you may wake up. Some of you are always telling China to wake up. If you don’t soon wake up to the importance of this question at home and abroad you will have a rude awakening.”



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

**I**T is said somewhere : “ No nation can live and prosper and be great that silently acquiesces in the bastardising of the youth of that nation.” That is true. The bar sinister does in these days confer a wholly unwarrantable slur. If we are to believe—

The child is father of the man :  
And I could wish my days and years to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety,

every effort should be made to combat that impression. Particularly is this the case in regard to the progeny of the inter-racial marriage of convenience. Practically there is shown all over the East to-day a disgraceful callousness to the fate of the offspring of the white man and the native woman. This was never the case amongst the Oriental races. Even in Burma, where intercourse is, up to a point, free and unrestrained, custom provides for the offspring of the unmarried. Thus, from an official publication describing the inhabitants of the Machin Hills and the Chingpaw we learn that “ before marriage the young people are allowed to consort as they please. In villages to the north there are always two or three so-called bachelors’ huts (*dum’nta*) at the disposal of any maiden with any favoured

man. If they do not care for each other, they part, and no one has the right to interfere. Each is free to experiment with anyone else. If they care for each other, they marry. The result of this is claimed to be that unchastity after marriage does not exist. In case a child results, it is usual to arrange for its birth in the man's house, and he has to kill a bullock and pigs to honour the *nats* of the damsel's home. In addition he has to pay a fine to the parents of a spear, a *gong*, a *dha*, and some pieces of clothing, or else he must marry her. Otherwise the parents have a "debt" against him. When he has paid the required fine, the man can take or leave the child, just as he pleases. This free love at once recalls the description given by Marco Polo of the marriage customs of Tibet, where no widow was thought of as a wife until she had proved herself a child-bearing reality; the greater number of fathers, the more conclusive the proof. Herodotus has a similar tale, but in the case of the Gindanes of Libya the number of lovers was ostentatiously displayed to prove that a girl must be worth marrying. Such sordid proofs as babies are not referred to.

The advent of the white man has made a considerable difference to the great islands of the Eastern Archipelago and the contingent regions of the continent, and the question as to what race shall ultimately people these islands is one difficult to answer. Shall it be the half-breeds, the quarter breeds, or the octoroons? The breeds are getting so mixed, and more mixed every day, that one has to pause and think where we are landing ourselves?

No law exists, nor is any law likely to be made to stop,

or check, cohabitation between white and brown. But there ought to be some definitely simple method of fixing responsibility upon the male parent for the offspring of such union. At present it would seem to be the fashionable thing for the white man to provide himself with a house-keeper just as long as her attractions remain, and when these pall, to turn mother and child adrift to make way for a younger consort. As a result, the fatherless child is a sort of copper-coloured, whitey-black Ishmael. In the East no one owns him, no one provides for him the barest necessities of life. He grows up dissolute and ignorant. Frequently he drains the cup of destitution to its bitterest dregs, becoming an idle vagabond, and a menace to Society. Surely the wise leaders of the greatest Empire the world has ever known can devise some means of saving these young assets of the nation, the offshoot of white and black, even if they bear the definite mark of the bar sinister in their complexion ?

We hear of missionaries with untold gold at their command, but we see no results of their labours, excepting on paper, and they appear to wholly disregard this work which seems specially within their province. If in this working out of the race problem, wherein the white man, being lord and master, gratifies his meanest sensual wish at the expense of the black woman, why should the children perish ? The fatherless children in the East may be counted by tens of thousands. Some of the fathers are occupying high places here on earth, but their children are foredoomed to the gutter or the stews. It is not a pleasant thought for the white people at home, and failing the



bringing of parental responsibility home to individuals, philanthropy or the State might do worse than open an orphanage for the fatherless boys and girls of the East. It would have to be a big one though.

Often I have seen half-white girls, and pretty at that, herding with a mob of ignorant, black, and very dirty savages and wished that their fathers might have seen them. I know it made me feel ashamed of the colour of my skin.

Some good folks say that this is not a burning question. If I mistake not, some of the fathers will find it a roasting one when they attempt to enter the land "where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths have no end," but then I am only an Australian, and I have been told that "we Colonials" are "too beastly sentimental for anything." Please don't forget that many of the grown-up Eurasians, half-castes, whose parents have not been deaf to the call of nature, are very well-informed persons, intelligent, proud and dignified. Many of them feel keenly any slight that is put upon them, owing to their colour. They scornfully resent the tightly-drawn colour line which some of the new chums of the "gosling-gander-geese" breed draw so definitely.

Indeed, it has been more and more the custom of late years for the young and foolish to sneer at an Eurasian in public. Yet, at the same time, many of them hide the fact that they are in secret doing their best to populate the earth with a mixed race. Ask some of these representatives of the bull-dog breed to meet an Eurasian at a dance or a theatre party and they become petrified at the very idea

of associating with one of black blood—at least, before the public. Hence the bitter, silent, but deep, feeling against the British young blood is being steadily, but very surely, embedded in the hearts of the Eurasians.

I chatted with two well-educated young men on the subject the other day, and one made no effort to conceal how deeply he felt upon the subject. “What right have they to make us feel the bitter brand of earth?” he asked. “It is not our fault that we were born into this world without a white skin. We were not consulted about being born half-white and half-black. Most of us own good mothers, and men of bravery for our fathers.

“My father,” he said, “was a British officer who stood under fire many times in defence of his country. Still, I am called the ‘offshoot of Tommy Atkins’ in derision.

“His father,” pointing to his companion, who was sitting apart listening to the conversation, “was a captain of a British vessel and ran the blockade often in the Chino-Jap War. Bravery was his main virtue, yet these young English fools call him the ‘get of a sailor,’ and his and my mother names that I will not mention. Is it not better to be the best children of an unauthorised union than to be highly born, and the worst child of such a union? If some of the Eurasian women sin, why should we all be despised and slandered by English men and women? You can take it from me that we Eurasians will not be content to be always despised; the white blood in us ought to be sufficient to answer for that, and when the day of reckoning comes we shall not be counted on the side of those who refuse to own us. We should be spiritless, indeed, if we

did not resent the insults which we daily have to bear from those we meet in business, or privately, and even in the Press. The other day I saw the following story printed. I suppose it was intended to be funny. It was the story of a question put to a boy in school :

“ ‘ Who is the father of the black man ? ’

“ ‘ Answer—‘ God.’

“ ‘ And of the Eurasians ? ’

“ ‘ The soldiers, sir.’

“ There may be something humorous in it, but you cannot expect an Eurasian to see the point of the joke.”

I agreed with my intelligent companion. I only wished I could get hold of the inventor of that story to teach him a lesson in manners, charity, and common courtesy.

The lot of the Eurasian girl is just as difficult as that of the boys. Some of them are pretty, and certainly a fair advance on the men in intellect and go. They are extremely intelligent, and they are almost universally vivacious. So far as marriage is concerned they have but a very limited range of choice. Many of them are devout ; in other cases, where there are no strict parents to look after them, they are lax in their morals. Their ideal is marriage with an all-white man, and when an opportunity of marriage is afforded them they will make an effort with all the craft in their nature to catch the fresh mackerel. If that is not attainable they lay themselves out to hook one with only a streak of colour in his blood. Not a native ! They in nine cases out of ten shudder at the thought.

It was when I was staying in Ceylon that the full realisation of what the colour bar means was first brought home



to my mind, and, indeed, so far as England is concerned, the Eurasian problem is only really acute in India and Ceylon, though it will not be many years before it will become equally pressing in the Far Eastern dependencies.

Really, one would not expect any social problem to present itself in Ceylon, where the streets, the parks, the walls, are all so scrupulously clean that plague and disease seem almost to be banished. The strictest rules of cleanliness, the nearest approach to happy civilisation in the East, is there met with. The people appear to be clean, bright, happy, sparkling with good humour, all gaily and gorgeously dressed, many of them resplendent with valuable jewellery.

I was staying at what the aristocratic "dead-beat" calls a "good-house," away on the hills, not far from where some of England's ex-beauties on the sundown side of forty act as "magnates." It was just about as good a house as a house can be in the East, but that does not mean to say that it was better than it should be.

At this house I met a girl, highly educated, plain-spoken, no nonsense, no side, "honest talk off honest bats," acting as a governess. But she had a "dip in the inkpot," as they term it in Ceylon, and being half-caste, she was mighty near outcast. She was a proud, haughty, yet unhappy girl. One evening the house had gone to a "hop-and-sit-down" dance near Mount Lavinia—delightful spot. The governess was told off as watch-dog to the home, and over our coffee she most unexpectedly made me acquainted with the Eurasian girl's point of view.

Something prompted me to ask her what nationality her father was.

Her lips quivered. She looked me very straight in the face and said, "He was an Australian."

"And your mother?"

"A woman of India." Her eyes dropped for a moment or two as she stared vacantly at an orchid creeper that luxuriantly beautified the cool end of the verandah. That was the beginning.

"You see," she continued, "I am an Eurasian, half European and half Asian." She smiled faintly. "My dad was a good man. He had me educated in the convent whilst he was abroad. When my education was finished, I was proficient in music (theory and practice), I became a good linguist, and passed my examinations with great credit. At fancy-work and painting I am said to be an adept.

"My father, who had gone to Australia, fell ill and ceased to pay my board. He urgently called me to his bedside, but under the circumstances of my birth, and the black blood circulating in my veins, I was prevented from going to him."

She stared in vacancy, and then proceeded:

"I had perforce to remain here; my blood and colour prohibited me from fulfilling my duty at my father's bedside. I have to carry the curse of my mother's weak moments with a white man, silently, but with a heavy heart."

The hot colour played on the poor girl's cheek—she was white enough for that—the fire of defiance of the ethics of civilised hypocrisy seemed to dance in her eyes.

“We Eurasians are the latest auxiliaries amongst the races to come under the holy ethics of your Christianity, and yet we are cursed. We are Christians, who all profess, however imperfectly, to follow the teachings of the Divine Master, who died on Calvary for the redemption of mankind. Yet we are pointed at, scorned, by those who profess the same faith.”

“It will not always be so,” I urged. “Some day your views must be heard and your position acknowledged.”

She smiled, shook her head, and said :

“You don’t know. You are only a visitor and cannot realise the position of the Eurasian woman in the East. Really it is worse than that of the *demi-mondaine* in Europe. We are despised and spat upon by the whites, unless momentarily they wish to make use of us. Then we are cast aside like a worn and torn glove, not wanted any longer. Ah, my friend,” she said, with tears in her dark eyes, “you are a writer. Why not urge that we ought to be treated in a manner more compatible with your Christian teachings. I speak to you thus freely, because I ask you in the name of common virtue, in the name of humanity, to let the good people in England know the life of the unfortunate Eurasian girl in the East.

“What would such good women, great mothers, and great teachers, as the Countess of Aberdeen, Lady Henry Somerset, the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, and their followers say if they knew of the way we are treated? I tell you that we are considered fair game for any rascal, that no insult is deemed too great for us to accept with a smile, simply because we have native



blood coursing through our veins ? What would the good women, the virtuous mothers of England say if they knew that girls with white blood in their veins are held in bondage body and soul, ravished, ruined, and . . . murdered, so to speak, in open day . . . every day of the week, and every week of the month, and every month of the year . . . in the East ? No one cares. Anyone may decoy, entrap, and hold in bondage the life and soul of the young ignorant Eurasian girl for their own base usage. No one says a word for us. The only hope we seem to have in the East, we children of the mixed race, is to abandon God and man, and appeal to the devil to keep his imps from us. Respectability counts for nothing ; education counts for nothing ; to be virtuous is to be sneered at, laughed at, and charged with hypocrisy.”

I was very much moved at the outburst of this dark daughter of Eve, and it made me take some trouble to ascertain how far it was justified. Taken all round, I think she is not far wrong and that her view of the treatment of the Eurasian girl in India needs to be carried to the door of every right-thinking man and woman in England. Undoubtedly many thousands of Eurasian girls never get a chance at all, but are born and dragged up in the Eastern slime, to pass thence into the unknown beyond before they are out of their teens ; not to speak of the unfortunate, uncared-for children, whom God allows to come upon the earth, and man promptly destroys.

Take, for instance, the case of a black coolie woman, living in coolie quarters, giving birth to a half-white child. She is considered to have drawn a substantial prize in life,

for her assets have been materially increased by the birth of this child girl. The girl is well-fed, nourished, brought up, for eleven, sometimes only for nine years. Then the mother sells that child, whose father may be a white man of influence, a mere soldier, or a commercial traveller, whom she met at an hotel at which she worked. The half-white child which has been thus brought up carefully for its animal possibilities is then sold to the highest bidder amongst the full-blooded blacks in the neighbourhood where she lives, maybe, and is taken off by her new lord to his abode. As she only knows Eastern customs, dresses as the coloured people do, eats their food, obeys their customs, there would seem to be no hardship in that. But not infrequently the strain of white blood is traded upon by her husband. She is often sold to her husband's neighbours until the child-wife is actually done to death for hire for money. She may herself become the mother of one of those who have the curse of the strain of white blood coursing through their veins, and that child follows again in its mother's footsteps.

That is the best fate of the half-caste with the unknown father. In the brothels of the East is written the history of many more.

In India, public attention has more than once been publicly called to the latter evil, and the law if at present enforced ought to be able to deal with the disposal of children in such a manner, though there are undoubted difficulties in the way. These are clearly shown in a case that came before the Indian High Court during the present year, on a reference from the Sessions Judge at Nasik.

In this case a woman was convicted of cheating in respect of a sum of money which she had received in advance as part of the hire agreed upon for letting her daughter for dancing to a person named Ananda Raju. She failed to deliver possession of the daughter to the man, who thereupon prosecuted her for cheating before a first-class magistrate, Sirdar Vinchurkar, of Nasik. The magistrate convicted the woman and sentenced her to four months' imprisonment. The Sessions Judge referred the case to the High Court, as he was of opinion that the agreement was of an immoral character, the real purpose of the arrangement being concubinage.

The High Court, I am glad to say, has upheld the view of the Sessions Judge and set aside the conviction and sentence. There were a number of questions arising out of this case which demand consideration. Is a mother entitled to enter into a contract pledging the personal services of her daughter even for an objectionable purpose? If she is, is the proper remedy for the breach of such a contract a criminal prosecution? If the mother had engaged to proffer her own services and had failed to act up to her engagement, she would have incurred no criminal liability, and she could have been proceeded against only by means of a civil suit. The charge of cheating in the case referred to was a gross abuse of the penal law apart from the real nature of the agreement which the Sessions Judge exposed. In all probability the girl concerned in this case was a minor. The law prescribes penalties for the employment of minors in factories, and it is anomalous that minor girls can be practically sold into the most degraded form of



slavery without the parties to such a nefarious contract being brought to book for their iniquity.

The case aroused indignant comment in more than one quarter, and it was prominently expressed in the *Times of India*, which called the attention of the Society for the Protection of Children to the case. Thereupon the Secretary of that Society at Poona sent the following letter to the Editor of the *Times of India* :

“ Sir,—I was very glad to see in to-day’s paper your indignant leader calling public attention to the way in which the persons of young girls can be sold into the most hopeless slavery, as concubines, without at present any remedy. Not only was this the case in the present instance, but the mother of the girl was actually sent to prison for four months, because she declined to deliver up the person of the child to the man who had purchased her, and paid down part of the purchase money ! It was lucky indeed that in this case appeal was possible, and that the mother did not have to spend months in prison, because at the last moment she had repented and saved the virtue of her child.

“ I have again and again, however, on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Children, Poona, called attention to the peculiarly helpless position in which girls above the age of twelve are under the Indian law at the present moment. Apart from actual violence being used against them, they may be treated in any way you please. Their parents, or anyone who has them in charge, may bargain with them as counters. They may sell them

as dancing girls, which always means an immoral life. They may sell them as concubines, or, in other words, into a state which may become prostitution within a few weeks, months, or years—but which almost always becomes prostitution in the end.

“The case which has called forth your indignation is one which is, in its essence, of common occurrence. In our large cities, like Poona, we have a regular trade in little girls. Children are bought when babies for a trifle, or obtained for nothing. And the prostitutes who take charge of them bring them up. On reaching the age of thirteen or fourteen they are sold, sometimes very profitably. Offers of such girls have actually been made in Poona to my Society’s agent at prices varying from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 20. And if they are only purchased as dancing girls, or are obtained as concubines, there is no breach of law. Such is the character, I doubt not, of the case which has recently come before the court and to which your leader draws attention.

“The only way that I can see by which this horrible state of things can be remedied is by raising the age to which the law gives its protection to girls, from twelve to sixteen years. If such a change did not affect the question of marriage, it would have the support of practically all Indian opinion in the Bombay Presidency which counts in the matter. The Government have obtained a few opinions adverse to such a change, but there is a vast majority in its favour. And I feel that it only needs that attention should be called to a few such cases as that reported in your leader to raise such a storm of indignation throughout

Western India as will compel some change which will prevent our children being, as at present, at the mercy of any villain who casts his eyes upon them."

To this illuminating letter all I need add is that the half-caste girl is at once a more valuable article of merchandise than the pure native article and also the more unprotected, and from these facts my insistence that special efforts should be made to protect her is shown to be fully warranted.

Unfortunately, the case of the girl whose father does realise his responsibility to some extent is not much better. If she is lucky, her father pays for her food and clothes and she is brought up in a very much superior manner to the rest of the children in the village. All the village knows that her father was a policeman or a magistrate, or a soldier. She develops well, has good food, and eventually the time comes for her father to send her to school under an assumed name. The convent is the school for choice. Here she learns from her teachers all that is good, but from some of the older girls and washers-up she gets more hints as to what is to fall to her lot in the future. On and on she goes, in a dreamy girl's paradise of ignorance, until at last the time comes for her to leave school. She and happiness then come to the parting of the ways. Her father, who may be all-powerful in the district, speaks to a draper, or some other kind owner of a sweating shop, who offers to take the girl and teach her to serve behind the counter, for a nominal wage. She boards in one of the semi-religious homes for girls, where the food is rough



and uninviting. Her days are dismal, friends she has none, except her shopmates. Her father considers he has done his duty for his coloured offspring, and now he has finally obtained for her a start in life he has done with her. She must paddle her own canoe.

Thus, half educated, half informed of the vile pitfalls of the world, and totally ignorant of all that occurs outside the narrow sphere in which she has been reared, she is thrown on her own resources. Her mother she has learned to loathe as a black woman. Her father she does not mention, except in a whisper. She is not sure whether the parent she has been praying for and longing to speak to, to see, to know, and to love, is her rightful father. Three or four different men have been mentioned to her, purposely to confound her, and to leave plenty of room for the real father to escape public censure.

Thus the poor wretch has to face the world alone. What are the chances of her coming through the ordeal? Once she leaves the convent the news that "something fresh has come to town" soon spreads abroad. The innocent child is invited out to questionable places, dances, moonlight picnics, boating parties, etc. The girl's friends—old hands who have usually been through the business—prompt the child, in the interest of some profligate, some known scoundrel or "gentleman," reformed gaol-bird, or thief, who has left his country for his country's good, and is at the very moment polluting the air with his pestilent presence. He becomes acquainted with the "new belle of the draper's shop." The innocent girl in her virgin freshness is taken out to one of these entertainments.

All eyes are, of course, on the new-comer. She is flattered, made much of, offered wine, then a stroll in the beautiful moonlight. Vows and promises on the part of the tempter assist to stir the girl's vivid imagination. Her unsophisticated head is soon turned. Sacred promises and the rest leave her deserted by all, her virtue departed, and the devil's grip upon her.

That is not a unique story. Far from it, for a large number of Eurasian girls are employed in shops or restaurants, tea-houses and the like. These are the only outlets for their labour, all the domestics being black boys and Chinamen. The Chinamen do all the sewing, dress-making, shirting, staymaking, and millinery. Therefore the only hope for an Eurasian is the shops. Some of these girls have no homes, but live in lodgings on the poorest fare. Others live—in Rangoon and in some of the principal towns in India—in the Y.W.C.A.'s at almost charitable rates.

These are for the most part good girls, yet rumour has it that all is not good with a percentage of them. It would be remarkable if it were. The pay is so poor in the shops that some of them, as in similar circumstances at home, supplement meagre earnings by methods which do not commend themselves to moralists. It is the old story.

At the Y.W.C.A. establishments the rules compel them to be in at night at 9 p.m. But a girl can usually find some excuse for failing to return. The usual "been to a party" and "slept with a friend" serve as a simple screen for some adventure which would not bear investigation. Taken all round, a good deal of immorality goes on amongst the

Eurasian shop girls, but some excuse may be made for them, ostracised as they are by the whites, and detested by their mother's people because of their assumption that they are of the white race. They are, in fact, in a position which makes them an easy prey to the dissolute white man. When the Tempter comes along, with fine clothes, fine promises, fine food, the disheartened and disowned girl succumbs, in many cases at least.

In nearly all cases of cross-breeds it is very noticeable that the girls take after the father in looks, intelligence, gestures, even in walk. One day, noticing two or three young Eurasian girls going along the street arm in arm, laughing and chatting, an old reprobate, very old in sin, remarked to me, "See that one on the outside, she with the long chestnut hair? Watch her step, it's the goose-step. Her father was a soldier." On the contrary, the Eurasian boy takes after the mother, as a rule. He is ordinarily dull, stupid, unconvincing, generally short, flat-nosed, and wide-mouthed, with projecting teeth. He knows and cares little for morality. If it is convenient for him to marry, he would just as soon marry an Eurasian girl, who had two children before she had a husband, or a girl who only committed the venial sin of having one. If she had none at all, he would probably think she was "too slow to catch children," and abandon her forthwith. There is obviously nothing strange in the reason of it. His mother's life and way of thinking reappear in him; it's in his blood. He has absolutely no morals, no knowledge of our Western code. Marriage is simply a matter of convenience with him. It has nothing to do with morality. He



knows nothing of love, it's a passion not born in him, and not cultivable ; in love matters he is cold and imperturbable as a monumental tombstone of pure alabaster.

Convenience and comfort he understands, but looks for little beyond. He learns to play billiards and put his money on the wrong horse, and occasionally to get drunk, but he takes even his sports mechanically, and slowly at that. In his work you may be certain of one thing—that when the whistle blows it is time to knock off work and hasten home. But that is a trait of character not entirely confined to the Eurasian. He need not have learned it from the elephants in the timber-yard, who will always drop a log they are shifting and run to the food-house the moment the whistle blows.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CONCLUSIONS

AFTER travelling in the East for nearly two years and remaining in different populous cities long enough to gain an intimate knowledge of the effect of the “Christian brand” of civilisation on the Eastern native, one is constrained to ask, as Madame Mère asked her son, Napoleon the First, “How long will it last?” Is the end nearer than most optimists will allow? Or if the end is not in sight, must the civilising methods cease and a reign of reason begin? But how is that reign of reason and hope to begin? Where do our responsibilities start and where do they finish? These are questions the reasonable-minded Britisher must ask and answer. We are in possession of many valuable Eastern provinces. We have in our charge the lives, the happiness, and the well-being of many millions of souls. Our responsibilities are great, and for our good name’s sake, as well as from a purely humanitarian point of view, they must be fairly faced.

We have, it is true, done much, but much more remains to be done if Britain’s great congregation of coloured subjects are to live and prosper under the flag in contentment. We educate the youth of colour, but when we have done that we do as Pontius Pilate did—wash our hands of

the whole business. Thus we are faced with the problem of an educated and semi-Christianised coloured race to whom we deny equal rights and equal privileges with ourselves. We first teach the man of colour to know the joys of being educated, the consolation and brotherly love Christianity should bring, then we leave him to do the best he can in his own country where the white man's law and word is paramount. If the educated man of colour now grumbles at this treatment and asks for equal privileges and equal rights and a fair chance, where education and ability should count, he is treated with contempt. This breeds in his heart hatred and revenge. The mind, elevated with the knowledge our teaching has given it, prompts the heart that is sore, and the net result of all our effort is that we have made for ourselves a first-class agitator who, under the normal environment of the idle races of the East, soon develops into a first-class thief or an idle vagabond, preying on the order which educated him, but denied him equal rights. That is how the case stands.

Let me give one illustration. Whilst I was at Rangoon, Burma, a young Eurasian cycled out to where I lived to see me and to complain of the treatment he had received at the hands of the Indian authorities.

He was a fine specimen of manhood, healthy, strong, alert, with well-proportioned limbs and well-cut and regular features and a keen eye and active brain. His complaint was one of thousands—that his colour debarred him from getting employment at his trade in the great workshops at Calcutta. From papers this young Eurasian



showed me I was convinced he was one of the direct descendants of one of Britain's greatest generals who lived long ago in an important military camp in India. The general took to himself a native woman as wife, though unchurched, by whom he fathered several children, all of whom were well educated and well cared for. This young man was a direct descendant from the pair. All this Eurasian family had been well educated. He had at the moment uncles in the Civil Service of India, and he himself had passed all the tests to fit him for an important profession, but he was, in the country we took from his mother's ancestors, denied the right to work side by side as a skilled mechanic with the pure white man.

The excuse that is offered for banning the Eurasian from workshops is in many cases the old, old story—that their presence weakens the control the management have over the ignorant native coolie. This sort of unjust treatment must be broken down. If you are going to educate and elevate the natives and the half-breeds, equal rights, equal privileges, and a fair field, where brains and ability alone will count, must be the policy of the future government of our possessions in the East.

But how do we muddle along in momentous matters of this kind? Only the other day the present administrator of the Indian Empire declared in the House of Commons for the better education of the natives in India, but almost in the same breath the same administration proposes to take away from the natives born in the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and Hong-Kong rights which they have enjoyed as a means of getting

employment by entering the Civil Service. I had better let that sturdy champion of the different races living under the British flag in India and along the Eastern Archipelago right up to Hong-Kong, Mr. MacCallum Scott, speak up on this subject. This is what the hon. gentleman said on the question in the House of Commons :

“ The policy to which I object is embodied in a Regulation which has been passed by the Colonial Office, with regard to the Civil Service of Hong-Kong, the Straits Settlements, and the Federated Malay States. The regulation is to the effect that no British subject is to be admitted into the Civil Service of these Colonies and States unless he is of pure European descent on both sides. This is not merely a perpetuation of an old bad system—I would have less to say against it if it were merely the perpetuation of an old bad system—but it is a reaction. It is a reversal of a tradition of Imperial Government, and not only that, but it has been carried out in secrecy. When you have an important reversal of Imperial policy affecting the status of British subjects, one would expect it would be mentioned in this House before it is carried out. One would expect it would be mentioned in the Legislative Councils of the Colonies which are affected. It has been mentioned neither here in this Imperial Parliament nor in the Legislative Councils which are affected. So far as I have been able to understand, no member of these councils has been individually, and no members have been collectively, consulted with regard to this matter. I said it was a reversal of Imperial policy.

There is no policy more plainly established with regard to India and with regard to the Eastern colonies than the right of the native subjects of the Crown to have some share in the government of these colonies, some share in the lucrative posts. There is statutory authority for that. I would merely refer in passing to the Government of India Act, 1833, containing this clause, which Macaulay describes as ‘that wise, that benevolent, and that noble clause’ :

“ ‘No native of the said Territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty, resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Company.’

“ It is an old statute, but we have a more recent one than that. When the Government of India was taken over by the Crown after the great Mutiny, in the Proclamation which Queen Victoria addressed to her Indian subjects there was this clause :

“ ‘And it is Our further will that so far as may be Our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.’

“ That Proclamation and that particular clause was received with enthusiasm and acclamation by the good people of India. It has since been regarded as the Charter of the rights of these people. It expresses a policy which the Government of India adheres to, which it has adhered



to in an increasing degree, and which it would not abandon now even if it could."

Mr. MacCallum Scott is on sound ground, and since it is by the adherence to such principles that the ground is cut away from the feet of anarchy and revolution his utterances are well worth attention not only of the House of Commons, but of the British public generally.

The most important point to which we must direct our attention is the occupation which Great Britain is going to provide for the races she has been so busy educating in the East. They cannot all be policemen or Civil Servants, nor can they live on the doctrine of free trade. It is nothing to the educated native to inform him with enthusiasm that matches made in Japan can be bought when imported to India, under our glorious tariff, at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per box. This argument may suit Great Britain, but it is unsuitable to the native who is educated and civilised and is waiting for something to do, and has not in many cases a halfpenny to buy the imported article. Japan takes great care to keep her population employed by thrifty industry. If she did not she could not support the great army nor build her warships. We must open up industries and employ the people. What is the use of teaching them the ethics of Christianity and the beauty of learning if we do not offer them some fair employment? A native who knows Shakespeare, Byron, Milton, Macaulay, Marlowe, or Hume and is starving in his own country, whilst the white man flourishes, becomes a fairly dangerous menace to the good government of the country. An unemployed nation is the asset of the devil, and underpaid

labours of a nation are a curse and a blot on boasted civilisation. In the East unemployment means making agitators of the men and prostitutes of the women—that is, if you intend to educate them and then drop them.

At Burma the Hon. Lim Chin Tsong, a Chinese merchant, a great Chinaman, a great Britisher, a member of the King's governing council, a cultured, industrious, and rich man with the kindest heart God has ever put into man, saw with horror the thousands of wasted lives that were going daily into the devil's net in the East, especially Burma. He saw with pain women and children plying for the pence of prostitution. He saw little girls being sold for a few shillings from the starving household, and these sights, together with all the horrors of idle lives, prompted him to do something to give employment to the helpless. He started a factory for the making of matches. It was a costly experiment, but he took the matter up and there was no going back. The factory gave employment to hundreds of idle and helpless women and children, and one would have thought that that work of true humanity by giving employment would have been encouraged by the Government of Burma. But it was not so. The very fact that a private factory had started fairly frightened the free trade Government, who steadily refused to use the local matches and openly encouraged an importation of matches made in Japan, just, one supposes, to see how infernally "free trade" they could be.

I happened to be on one of the boats that was bringing a cargo of Japanese matches to Rangoon, and the steward

showed me as good evidence of our delightful policy of free trade and free to starve policy a box of matches made in Japan with Bryant and May's name upon it. Everything about the article was the same as Bryant and May's except, of course, the match.

It appears the matches are made in Japan with the English firm's name put on. They are then shipped to the delightfully free port of Singapore, rested there awhile, then reshipped to Rangoon, India, and other places where the British flag flies, as "made in England." There they are used with joy by the Government and nation's pensioners, whilst the local made article is not required, and the women and children who could find employment at making them starve or become vagabonds.

This is an incident that came directly under my notice, and it shows the need for some active brain power to be put into the affairs in the East. If a sensible policy of establishing industries throughout our Eastern Empire with a strong trade preference to the English-made article were carried out it would not only give employment to the masses in such articles as they may make, but it would stop—in a measure, at least—the foreign competition and give some trade to the nation that has to foot the bill of these great Eastern dependencies. There are many trades that could under proper fostering conditions be opened up and give employment to women, girls, and boys, and thus keep them off the streets and out of the gaols.

All through our great Eastern possessions we have a splendid sprinkle of the intelligent Eurasian man and



woman, but this great loyal class has not received much consideration from any Government. Signs, however, are not wanting that their position in the East will not remain much longer in the background. A commencement of just recognition has set in in more directions than one, the latest suggestion being that the Government should trust all Eurasians with military duty.

“We are glad to see,” states the *Pall Mall Gazette*, “that the Government of India are about to try the experiment of raising a small Eurasian regiment, under British officers. Eurasians fought well in the Mutiny, and some of the adventurers who won fame in India in earlier periods were of mixed blood. The Eurasian community is extraordinarily loyal. Its interests are peculiarly those of the ruling Power. In the past it has suffered much neglect and even obloquy. A corps of picked Eurasians ought to be a useful addition to the Indian Army. We trust, however, that the Government will abandon its rather foolish decision to change the official designation of Eurasians by calling them Anglo-Indians. Nobody accepts the decision, which has met with as much ridicule as Mr. Roosevelt’s attempt at reformed spelling.”

Every man who knows the Eurasians and loves the Empire will say : Bind this great class in the East to the Empire with the greatest ties of sympathy and strong help. Make their lives more hopeful and brighter and their hearts will reverberate with gratitude and they will become a power amongst the pillars of the Empire of which we all are so justly proud. The old order of inactivity of “let to-morrow come and go as to-day went,” live, eat,

and do nothing, debauch, and the "Get well or die policy" must be banished. A live policy and a sane policy, with justice and humanity and industry, must take its place.

Mr. Lovat Fraser, writing to the *Pall Mall Gazette* on India says :

"When the return of the Liberal party to power coincided with the close of a strenuous Viceroyalty of India we were told that India needed rest. The country has never had rest, and there seems no prospect that it will obtain it in the near future. First came the fierce outburst of Nationalist excitement, reinforced by the subtler and admittedly separate epidemic of Anarchist outrages. Then followed the Morley-Minto reforms, admirable in the main, largely justified by their results, but not exactly soporific. The Imperial visit last December, with its dramatic and revolutionary announcements, raised a whole crop of fresh and absorbing issues. Now we have an important Committee at Simla which is placing the entire system of Army Administration 'on the anvil,' a Royal Commission has been constituted which is to examine problems connected with the Indian Public Services ; and we are entering upon a new and comprehensive phase of educational development. All these projects are good. They should not be met with hostility. The plain fact is that we cannot cry 'Halt !' in India. Our work in the East cannot stand still. Events in Asia are moving so rapidly that the British in India cannot evade the currents which sweep them onward. The time has long since passed when the cry of 'over-education'

could obtain an unwise hearing. The best justification of British rule in India ought to be our educational system. That is not the case to-day, but the impending expansion sketched by Mr. Montagu will bring us perceptibly nearer the goal."

Every man who has given the matter one moment's serious thought will say, "Educate," and again repeat the word, "Educate," but something more is wanted as an auxiliary to education. You must find employment and industry. Education and idleness have been doing splendid devil's work in Egypt, and education and idleness has already commenced its work under the name of Nationalism in India. It may seem to have been blotted out, but the germs may be still vital in some of the dark corners of the highways and by-ways ready to break out again more virulently than before. This is the effect of education without occupation and citizens' rights. Most of the Eurasians are educated or are being so. Some of these half-breeds are fine men and women. Their case is stated very truthfully by a Burmese gentleman, himself an intelligent Eurasian.

Writing of his caste, he says :

"Soon after the occupation of India and Burma by the British, alliances were formed with the women of the country by individuals of the ruling race, with the result that in due course a community gradually sprang up which the Englishman not only disowned but designated half-caste, or East Indian. Each succeeding generation of this class through intermarriage amongst themselves came in



time to lose those national traits of both physique and character which distinguished their ancestors, until some of the poorer sections of the mixed stock, through occasional amalgamation with the native and other adverse associations, had so deteriorated that but for the outer garb a major portion of them can now be scarcely distinguished from the neighbouring native.

“As these questionable relations often subsisted among men of rank and standing as well as those of subordinate position, there was at first little disgrace manifested in connection with such associations; and then, as now, men whose moral character was anything but transparent had as free access into society as those whose private life was irreproachable; while, on the other hand, fallen individuals of the frail sex, inexplicable as it may seem, were ostracised from so-called respectable circles without the least compunction. Why this unjust and cruel distinction should continue to be maintained among the offenders of the weaker sex has always seemed to me problematical, for while in the one case it opens the door to hypocrisy and corrupt communication, in the other it bars the door to reformation, ultimately leading its victim to despair and misery, and probably to a premature end.”

Without, however, entering on a dissertation on the terms Eurasian and Anglo-Indian as now applied, it will be sufficient for my purpose to explain that the former term, a compound from Euro and Asian is used to designate a person of mixed blood, that is one whose parentage or ancestry is partly European and partly Asiatic, or one

derived from such stock ; while Anglo-Indian or country-born is more generally applied to those Europeans who have acquired a permanent domicile in India or are naturalised British subjects. In contradistinction to those of their compatriots who have gained no such personal experience, the term Anglo-Indian is also often assumed by, or used to distinguish such Europeans as have returned home from India after a longer or shorter sojourn in that country necessitated by public service or through other business relations.

The most tragic life at the moment in the East is that of the Eurasian girl, whose father is a well-to-do man of position, one who supports his child by stealth to avoid scandal. This class of Eurasian girl, deserted by her native mother, despised by her white father, surely should awaken God's mercy.

The white man avoids her as wife, but he will entrap her by any means as his concubine. He will lower and degrade her until hell opens its jaws to receive her, but he will not marry her. There are, of course, Eurasian girls married to white men, and splendid wives they make, but the number is few. The deserted Eurasian girl seems to be the sport of the East for the white debauchee. Any means are good enough as long as the present animal passion is gratified. One of the pious nuns—a “mother” in a big convent out East—assured me that the trouble of her dear girls commenced the day they left the convent. Father and brother, sometimes friends, joyfully paid the small yearly portion until the Eurasian girl was sixteen or seventeen years of age. Then she was expected to go

out into a new world and face a mob of human hyenas in the forms of men scrambling to be first in the race for her distribution.

“After the girls leave,” said the reverend mother, “we always try to advise them, but, alas, we can do so little. There is no place for these girls to go to, and even the Christian houses are no sure protection for the young, innocent, and virtuous girl. These places are generally dismal and dungeon-like. The food is sometimes bad, and the rules and regulations one would think are specially drawn up to keep girls from inhabiting the house. The old girls in these places are old hands, in some cases at least, at immorality. When a girl leaves school she has to go into a shop to learn the business. The wages are small, the hours long, and the work soon becomes distasteful to her. If the Government had a farm, factory, or a good decent home run by a proper living woman, who could be a mother, a guide, a friend, to these poor girls with the colour curse in their veins, how many lives and souls might be saved! But nothing is done, no one cares, nor do any of the governing authorities want to be bored with the problem. It’s the duty of all Governments to govern for the good, the safety, and the virtue of those who govern. Many young, very young, Eurasian girls, fearful of the tragedy of the fate that may await them in the East if they remain single, rush at the first marriage proposal that is made to them, some of them mere children. The horror of disease and death, the portion of her who has held out and tried to battle the storms of life is always before the girl-child. She often gets



married to secure a roof over her head and arms to shelter her."

An eminent Eurasian writer at Rangoon, Burma, writing on the subject of the Eurasian's early marriage, says :

"The complaint is frequently put forward by existing Eurasian associations that members belonging to their community are precluded from entering the Military and Naval services of Government as many of them would like to do. Rightly so, I say, because the essential qualifications are lacking in the great majority of the class that seek to join those services : these are physique, stamina, reliability, and single blessedness. The defects in the two former are sufficiently accounted for by (1) early marriage, (2) lack of physical training, and (3) avoidance of manual labour which tends to develop a healthy and muscular constitution.

"The necessity for self-control and regulation of the passions was never perhaps, through a false modesty or delicacy of feeling, inculcated by parents or teacher as a duty incumbent on them. On the contrary, early marriage is looked upon by most of the uneducated class of the community very much in the same light as it is by the Hindus, i.e. as a duty incumbent on the parents of the parties concerned, often regardless, not only of age but also of expense, which the ceremony is made to involve as well as of the ability of the man to support a wife. Like the natives, they consider the sooner such an important event is arranged and consummated during the lifetime of the parents of the contracting parties, the greater the reason

for satisfaction. So also like the people of the country, no expense is spared; nay, the needful funds are, as frequently as not, even borrowed to make a display on the occasion which is usually marked by a feast which sometimes terminates in a bacchanalian orgie. Thus is life commenced by the married couple with a heavy load of debt hanging over them or their parents like the sword of Damocles, which in all likelihood may take years to discharge, if efforts are at all made to that end.

“Is it any wonder, then, that the offspring of such premature and improvident alliances should prove as they often do feeble and sickly? and as neither parents possess any knowledge of the right upbringing of their young, the latter necessarily often grow up like them—uneducated, thriftless, vulgar, vicious, and sottish. Under such circumstances is not Government justified in debarring applicants of the Eurasian community from services requiring special fitness, such as the Naval and Military?”

“It might probably be urged, as in the case of Hindus, that early marriage is advisable if not actually necessary in the interests of morality. But it ought to strike the advocates of the baneful custom that such unseemly haste for the reason alleged forms a serious indictment against the morals of the community; for it assumes that young men of this class, scarcely out of their teens, possess no moral principle to restrain their passions which therefore control them instead.”

It is sometimes thought that girls in this country attain puberty at a very early age because of climatic influence,

but this theory is contradicted by Mrs. Mansell, M.D., of Cawnpore, in the following terms :

“ The idea is very common that Indian girls are more precocious than others, and therefore marriage must be hastened. For centuries such pernicious customs have prevailed, so that girls have obtained a forced puberty which would probably never have existed under natural conditions. The female mind has been left vacant and uneducated and has thought of little else than frivolous and sensual objects before reason and judgment have become matured and before correct principles have been formed. Thus an unnatural forcing of the animal instincts and an unnatural stimulation of the passions have developed the Indian races as we see them to-day. The mind influences the body.

“ The system of early marriage panders to sensuality, lowers the standard of health and of morals, degrades the race, and tends to perpetuate itself and all its attendant evils to all future generations. Such is the law of heredity.

“ If Indian marriages could be generally deferred to a later period for a few generations and girls given an opportunity to change the current of their thoughts and habits, if they could become better educated and better disciplined—the habit of early pubescence would become broken and approach more nearly the normal standard. A marked improvement in mental calibre, in morals, in physique, would soon become perceptible, the dangers of child-bearing would be minimised, and a healthy and vigorous race would be secured.



“ In view, therefore, of the pauperising and degenerating tendency which the system of early marriage creates among the Eurasian community, and in view also of the fact that the community as a whole is not sufficiently enlightened either to realise the consequent evils of premature marriages, it is most desirable that missionary bodies as well as Eurasian and Anglo-Indian associations throughout the Empire should combine to move the Government to amend the Indian Marriage Act applicable to Eurasians, so that no marriage shall be solemnised between any man and woman of that class whose age is below twenty-one years. It should also be made conditional with the man, or he should be bound to certify that he is in a position to support a wife—a step which would in some measure also serve to check the incorporation of the native element with the community.”

I will say a last word for the Eurasian because I am sure they are a big British asset in the East too long neglected and because they are staunch loyalists to the Empire's union.

The Eurasian authority says further :

“ It is true that there is apparently some ground for justification of the prejudice entertained by Europeans against fraternising with the Eurasian, the lower grades of whom are characterised by some of the vices common to the natives ; such as lying, dishonesty, and drunkenness : but that does not by any means constitute a good reason for any of the respectable class disowning his descent or admitting his birth nationality ; for there is no race or

community among the human family that has not its peculiar failings as well as merits, vices as well as virtues ; or which has not in one way or another become intertwined with others for centuries past ; and the older the world becomes and the greater the strides of science in the invention of means to bring distant lands and nations nearer to and in closer intercourse with each other, the greater will become the fusion of families through colonisation, so that it will be no easy matter to trace the national pedigree of any single individual of a community or generation.

“ After all, if the ethnologist’s view is accepted that the various shades of complexion in man are dependent on the degrees of pigment underlying the epidermis, giving the exterior the diversity of colour it presents, without, however, affecting the blood, then Professor Max Müller cannot be wrong when he maintains as he does in his ‘ Survey of Languages ’ that the same blood runs in the veins of the English soldier as in the veins of the dark Bengali, and that there is not an English jury nowadays which after examining the hoary documents of lawyers would reject the claim of a common descent and a legitimate relationship between Hindu, Greek, and Teuton. Such being the case, all classes of Eurasians as well as Europeans should bear in mind that it is really no more of a recommendation for one simply to claim pure European extraction without the moral advantages acquired by such birth than to belong to any one of the Asiatic or African races ; although it must be admitted that the accident of European birth does give the individual in the eyes of the native a conventional significance through his identity

with the ruling race and therefore a sort of title to some respect. Thus the complexion alone in many cases with most people serves to give the white man or one nearly so a passport into society which is denied his dusky brother with qualifications perhaps infinitely superior to the former ; but this circumstance cannot admit of any credit being taken for superiority over the coloured person (‘ Who maketh thee to differ from another ? ’ 1 Cor. iv. 7). For, given the same advantage and placed in the same circumstances and surroundings, the Eurasian too would doubtlessly prove his equal in the contest. Truly has the poet said :

Honour and shame from no condition rise ;  
Act well your part ; there all the honour lies.

“ If the European would but calmly consider the fact that it is due to his own presence in the country of his temporary adoption that the race he despises or affects to despise has come into existence, he would doubtless so far from manifesting hatred or disdain be more disposed to sympathise and fraternise than to forsake the members of a community who are of his own flesh and blood.”

Addressing a school gathering at Burma, the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, Sir. H. Thirkell White, said :

“ I do not hesitate to include Eurasian boys brought up in India, who, if they are afforded proper training and scope, develop into as good specimens of the race as any in the world. I have little patience and no sympathy with Eurasians who shrink from owning themselves as such or with those who by speech or action encourage



them to do so. I hope the time is coming, if indeed it has not come already, when it will be recognised that Eurasians can and do exhibit the best characteristics of the East and West, and form an invaluable part of the European community in India. . . . I wish all you boys to bear in mind the great truth that besides book learning, which is not to be despised, there are other things of equal importance in school life. If you learn to be brave, courteous, truthful, and self-respecting, you will have learnt a good deal in addition to your school studies. I do not want you to be little prigs and think too much of these matters, in the abstract. Just live your school life naturally and happily, working hard and playing hard at the right time, and in after years you will understand the use and meaning of it all."

In regard to the white man living with the black woman one is conscious that it is much more easy to criticise than to compound a remedy. Concubinage is in full swing in the East, and will continue to be so as long as man is man and woman is woman, and there are many persons who defend the system or, rather, palliate it in preference to other of the evils that are rampant in the East. It's not good, we are told, for man to be alone. But whether it is good or bad, man will not be alone in the East. If you prohibit him from his enjoyment of concubinage, well, he will do far worse and wind up by being a diseased creature in human form, his life a curse to himself and a burden to everybody about him.

But it is the question of the children that is all important,

and in this respect I am glad to find that there are evident signs of awakening public opinion on the subject. Even while this book was being written there appeared in the *Burma Critic*, published at Rangoon, a notable pronouncement on the subject. It puts the whole case so clearly and involves some such useful suggestions that I may perhaps be forgiven for quoting extensively from the article. In commenting on a letter calling attention to those sad little waifs of society whose deserted lives constitute one of the blackest pages of human history, living indictments of man's cruelty and cowardice the world over, the *Critic* said :

“It is a perpetual tragedy in every land. Among all races, Western and Eastern, there have always been and, one must regretfully believe, there will always be, cowardly brutes whose cruel and shallow natures urge them to the gratification of their lust, heedless of their most innocent and defenceless victims, their children. No race can claim to own none of these men. They are everywhere ; and while the strength of public opinion, the growth of humanitarianism and actual preventive legislation tend to minimise the horrors of the children's tragedy in some countries, the cowardly work goes on in all lands.

“But the problem in Burma has very special and peculiar features which demand the earnest attention of all Europeans and particularly the English in this province. The desertion of children in one's own land is horrible enough, but a thousandfold worse is such conduct in such a country as this. In Burma the British are trustees,

guardians of the people's welfare ; and the fact that the English community tolerate in their midst those curs of men who victimise women and then deny help to them and to their offspring is a blot not only upon the community here, but upon the whole Empire. Two facts must be realised : (1) that, however much public opinion may condemn the unions of Europeans with the women of the country, nothing that can be said or written on the subject will ever put a stop to them ; and (2) that each one of us British, however humble may be his or her lot or duties here, has the power, minute perhaps in individual cases, but potent beyond words when united in a strong public opinion, to check the detestable scandal of treachery and desertion which is alas ! all around us. Let us take the first fact, and see if it be really as inevitable as it seems. It is useless to talk morality and argue that, because such illicit unions as these in Burma are contrary to our own ethical ideas, are ' sin ' in the language of the Church, they should not occur. There are many ' sins ' which we are all agreed are wrong, but they do not occur here and everywhere, and we know they always will occur. The circumstances of a young white settler or visitor to a tropical country are peculiar, and they need a special and broad-minded consideration and sympathy. Some people have said that Europeans should intermarry with women of their own nationalities ; but such people can know little of the circumstances of life out here, more especially of life in the districts. How is a young man with a salary of perhaps, Rs.300 or Rs.400 a month to bring out and marry a girl from Europe at a cost of more than he could



save in the course of a year ? Supposing he manages to do so, his difficulties are only commencing. The girl is new to the country ; she knows none of its languages, and she is an absolute stranger to all its ways and customs. His work will, perhaps, keep the man employed during all the hours of daylight away from his home, and this English or European girl has to be left with no English-speaking woman perhaps within fifty miles of her, absolutely friendless and alone, the best part of the day. If she preserved her health, it would be surprising. If she were really ill, she would have to be sent to the hills or to England, and two establishments would have to be kept upon pay which is found barely sufficient for one. We have taken, it may be argued, an extreme case, and some may say that the loneliness is not so absolute in the case of many Europeans, and that there is generally English-speaking society of some sort at most head-quarter towns in Burma. That may be ; but there are jungles in the Chindwin and other districts where European foresters and others do not ever see European women from one year's end to the other, unless they travel several days' journey to one or other of the towns. Under such circumstances, however much English ideas of morality may condemn temporary unions with Burmese women, there cannot be the smallest doubt that they will continue, suiting as they do both the man and the woman, and in view of the fact that they are considered quite proper and respectable from the Burmese point of view.

“ With those Europeans who, when their circumstances change, discard their temporary partners and their children

by them, there can hardly be in our opinion words in the English language sufficiently strong enough to use in condemnation of such cowardly and brutal selfishness. We would rather shake hands with thieves than with such degraded specimens of humanity. The man who steals our purse ! What is he compared to the brute who, after gratifying his passions, has neglected to provide for the victims of his lust, whom he has helped to bring into existence ? There is another class of creature, who falls within the genus ‘snob,’ not unknown, we are sorry to think, in Burma ; he who, whilst making some provision for his children, objects to their bearing his name. He marries in England, and calls the children whom his Burmese partner has borne him by some other surname. We have had one or two real English ladies in Burma who have not looked down upon their husbands’ children by Burmese women, but who have brought them up themselves and treated them as affectionately as if they were their own. To such noble-hearted women the heart of every true man who loves honesty and justice must go out in gratitude and respect. But we fear they are the exceptions. There are men too, many men we hope and believe, who do their duty nobly towards those who owe their being to them ; who do not and cannot forget, whatever be the regular ties which they may afterwards form, that obligation, the fulfilment of which manliness and honour demand from them. But if these men are a majority, there is, we all know, a considerable minority who are lost to all feelings of humanity and pity and who drag the glorious name of ‘ Briton ’ in the dirt. They are

of all classes ; and, if we may congratulate ourselves that those amongst them of gentle birth and high social standing are few in number, we must remember that those few have least excuse and afford pernicious examples to the crowd of the commoner offenders who find their readiest excuse in their betters' wrongdoing.

“ What, then, can be done ? What remedy, what salve can be found for this foul ulcer of Anglo-Burman life ? First and foremost, we must all agree to face the facts. One and all we must band ourselves together to make an end of that baneful hypocrisy which makes too many of us say : ‘ It is all very dreadful and I don't think it ought to be talked about.’ We have got to talk about it. We have got to wrestle with it. We have got to wince, each one of us, for the shame that is brought upon our land's fair name by our brutal fellow-countrymen. We have got to save and help these poor children who cry out to us from their lonely huts and hovels : ‘ Come and help us ! It is you and yours who have made us. Will you do nothing for us who have your blood in our veins ? ’ There is no hypocrisy so mean and detestable as that attitude of unctuous rectitude of the ‘ unco' guid ’ who would taboo what they call ‘ the improper ’ ; who would blink the grim and horrible facts of human desire. There are so many of us who play the moral Levite in life. A little more than a century ago the Duke of Wellington was taken to task by the Regency Council because he allowed women followers with his army in Spain during the Peninsular War. His answer is historic. ‘ If,’ he wrote, ‘ the Lords of the Council think that they can lead ten thousand men across the burning plain of



Spain without women, let them come and try it.' What the honest soldier wrote in 1806 is true to-day, will be true to-morrow and for all time, as long as men and women are flesh and blood. Here in Burma we are faced with the fact he recorded in all its nakedness. Some while back a ridiculous outcry was raised in the English Press over the so-called immorality of the younger assistants of a trading firm here. This indictment was as senseless as it was grossly unjust. There is no ground for suggesting that the young men of this firm or of any other firm, or the younger members of the public services are specially what is called immoral. They come out here in the zenith of young manhood ; they have to work and make their way in the world, at a time of life when the blood courses most hotly through their veins, in a climate and often under financial circumstances which forbid their marriage according to their country's customs. Are they to be condemned because they are healthy young men with natural passions ? Are we to ask of them the actually impossible ; to demand of them that they should encase themselves in the strait-waistcoat of an impossible propriety and chastity, impossible anywhere, but a thousand-fold more impossible in a tropical climate ? We cannot, if we are just and honest, expect them to live unnatural lives. If sexual passions were not to be reasonably indulged, were the unholy and disgraceful characteristics the unctuous humbugs of life cozen themselves into believing, we should not be endowed with them. Of that at least we can be sure.

“ But what we can ask of every Englishman here, rich

and poor, educated and uneducated, is that he plays the man, not the coward and the traitor ; that, if he must, as we know he must, mate himself with a girl of the country, that then he shall treat her tenderly and gratefully and regard as a sacred obligation the due provision for the children born of her. We can ask this much, and it is the solemn duty of the Government and the directorate of firms to take such steps as may be necessary to compel the unwilling to fulfil that obligation. There should be an end of this contemptible mock modesty and flinching from facts. If the Local Government does not know the exact nature of the ties and responsibilities formed and undertaken by its officers in all branches of the service, it ought to know. It is its business to find out. If the *burra sahib* of a firm does not make a point of discovering the way in which its assistants are living, then he is not doing his duty. This disgraceful problem of desertion and neglect can only be solved by practical methods. The Government now makes a feeble effort by means of a circular addressed to officers, warning them of the attractions of the women of the country. What utter ineptitude ! What sort of good is likely to result from issuing a warning to which nobody is going to listen ? It reminds one of the saying that there are two fools, one who gives advice and the other who does not take it.

“ What is urgently needed is plain, brutal, honest common sense and no wretched prudery. A Commissioner of a Division should be held responsible to the Local Government for the information they need as to the officers under him, just as he is responsible for the public conduct

of those officers. Each official living with a Burmese woman should have his name placed on a provident fund list, a special one to provide a small pension for the girl after the man's retirement and to afford means of education for any children born. Moreover, if he takes another girl, he must be compelled to state why the change is made and as to the fate of the last. The deductions and pay towards this fund would be automatic, as in the case of income-tax. Such deductions would not naturally be heavy as, thanks to the beautiful simplicity of life in the East, a sum which would buy a good hunter in England would buy for the Burmese woman and her little ones comfort and subsistence for all time. Exactly the same rule should obtain in firms. We have heard of one firm which dismissed an assistant for having an illegitimate child by a Burmese woman. Everybody connected with that establishment should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. Such a course of action is contemptible in its hypocrisy and cruel in its injustice. You cannot have chastity, certainly not among your younger men, out East, and you have to choose between a rational and honest safeguarding of the women and their children, or 'Burmanites' and their desolate equivalents all over the Indian and Oriental Empire. Can any man with a heart to feel pity, with a regard for his country's fair fame, hesitate in his choice?

"Subsidiary to the provident funds would be the establishment of proper homes and schools for these forlorn children. A good example are the Kalimpong Homes run by Dr. Graham, which look after the illegitimate children



of planters, and which are doing such noble work, generously supported by many of the men whose offspring are benefited. The girls are educated in lace manufacture and other industries ; the boys are taught farming and trades, and many join the Navy and the Merchant Service. The charge for each child is Rs.17.8.0 a month. In that part of India there are few, if any, of the scandals of sexual intemperance and desertion which disgrace this Province. When a planter starts to keep a mistress, he has to report to his managing agents in Calcutta, and he must state from whose tea garden he has taken her. This precaution is enjoined to prevent interference with his own labour and to stop jealousy and favouritism, such as would result from the girl's influence over the head of the estate.

“ And this brings up another and a serious aspect of the Burma problem, the way in which officials—usually honest and strict enough naturally—are influenced by their mistresses. It would be well that the Government should make a rule forbidding any I.C.S. or other official to take as his companion a girl from the district to which he is posted. The girl herself may be honest and, as we say, the official may be by nature above corruption. Yet one must remember in Burma that when you marry a Burmese woman, you marry her whole family, and this applies equally to illicit unions. There are the crowds of relatives, asking for small favours at first, and there is the dainty, coaxing, black-eyed little witch, holding her pretty pleading face up to the young man whose magic initials I.C.S. give him such power. Who will throw the

first stone if that young man fails his country in such an emergency ? It is the duty of his Government to protect him, as far as may be, from such failures. What is wanted so badly in Burma is a little plain speaking. We have got a flaccid Press and no public opinion. In this matter of the sexual relations existing now and absolutely certain always to exist between the Englishmen and the women of Burma we need good sound common sense ; no more, no less. There are plenty of good-hearted honest young men in Burma who would scorn to play the cur and desert the woman in whose society they had found such happiness. But there are the others, and measures must be taken to protect the Burmese women, the children, and, last but not least, the Empire's fair fame against these. The man who deserts a woman and his children is a scoundrel and a cur, and no decent-minded woman would admit such a creature to her drawing-room. Let the Government and the firms take the practical steps we indicate, and let the *mem-sahibs* of all social grades make it their business to find out the offenders and drive them out of Society, and it will not be many years before the tragedy of the lives of these pitiful deserted 'Burmanites' is mere past history."

What is required in Burma is equally necessary throughout the East. In Germany the Colonial party is very much exercised as to the ultimate outcome of the white man cohabiting with the black woman, and to deal with it the following resolution was proposed a few months ago in the Reichstag :

“The Federal Government to introduce a Bill to secure the validity of marriage between whites and coloured persons in all German protected states (colonies) and to regulate the rights of their illegitimate children in cases where the existing civil code has not been applicable.”

This, of course, deals with white Germans and their illicit intercourse with black women. It can have no reference to a white German girl marrying a black man, because there are none—none that I can trace. But the German case is not, nor can it be considered in any way analogous to our position in the East, first because the German law only deals with negresses, who are much lower in the human race than the beautiful Javanese, the sweet Burmese, and the laughing, gay, vivacious Malay. A white man might marry into any of the latter races and get an intellectual, industrious, and good wife, one whose children would do the pair credit—a model of physique and intelligence. But not so with the African negress, for which the German law seems to provide. In our Eastern countries there is nothing in the present law to debar a white man marrying a copper-coloured maid. My contention is that as the white man will not marry her but invariably uses her and deserts her he should be compelled to incur the reasonable penalty of his acts by supporting the children.

As for the question of prostitution, whether amongst the natives or white women, it should be strongly controlled, licensed, and kept clean. This is the opinion of the best men we have ever had in the East, and their opinion



should carry weight. Those persons who stay at home and criticise do not realise that disease is rampant and doing its deadly work, the authorities being afraid to move for fear of bringing down on their heads the wrath of the electors animated by the principles that Exeter Hall used to stand for. The men in authority out East will not budge from their line of inactivity for fear of the critics who send their masters, the ministers, to Westminster. One very distinguished Governor told me plainly he knew full well the army and the youth of the country was being most insidiously decimated by the diseases which were rampant, but that his orders were to do nothing.

The greatest blot on British rule in the East is the open, unrestricted, and much-boomed brothels existing at Singapore, Bombay, Campbell Street (Penang), Rangoon, Hong-Kong, and the other dependencies. There is no necessity for these dens of iniquity to exist in anything like the number they do. They practically receive Government support and protection. After all, what purpose do they serve? They shelter thousands of harlots, many of whom have been actually deported from their own countries—France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Japan, and Russia—because they were diseased. A sane Government would prevent such from landing, but our Government thinks that free trade should be extended to vice and the fruits of vice. Yet it does not improve the glories of British freedom for a man to be free to get ill, free to get well, and free to die, and be sure of a free funeral. Merely a hint from Downing Street to intimate to the authorities that they would not be deserted, as Lord Roberts was deserted,

to appease the anger of Exeter Hall, and to set to work to clean the Augean stables would be a highly congenial task to most, if not all, the Governors of the East. But they must obtain ministerial support to enable them to do what is proper, just, and healthy.

Let me end there. Prostitution will not be eradicated in the East, but it can and ought to be controlled and strictly supervised. Concubinage is a rational state, but that too needs regulation and provision against the lamentable results to the offspring of irregular unions. If I have done even a little to call attention to these necessities in the foregoing pages I shall be well content.

THE END



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KEIGHLEY SNOWDEN

Author of "The Free Marriage," "The Plunder Pit," "Hate of Evil," etc.

Stephen Gaunt, an English sculptor famous in Italy, is the father of a son born out of wedlock, whom he has never heard of. In his youth, a light attachment broken in a causeless fit of jealousy drove him abroad, but when the story opens he is a strong and engaging personality. He comes home to execute a commission, and meets his son without knowing him. In doing so, he encounters a couple, childless themselves, who have passed the boy off as their own since infancy, when his mother died. They are an elder half-brother, who has always hated Stephen, and his sensitive, tender and simple wife, who loves the boy with all her heart, fears to lose him, and who is yet tormented by her secret. A romantic friendship springs up between son and father; and the chain of accidents and proofs by which he learns the truth, his struggle for control of the boy, who has genius, and the effect of these events on the boy and his foster mother make a fascinating plot.

## **A Star of the East: A Story of Delhi.** CHARLES E. PEARCE. Author of "The Amazing Duchess," "The Beloved Princess," "Love Besieged," "Red Revenge," etc.

"East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." This is the theme of Mr. Pearce's new novel of life in India. The scene is laid in Delhi, the city of all others where for the past hundred years the traditions of ancient dynasties and the barbaric splendours of the past have been slowly retreating before the ever-advancing influence of the West. The conflict of passions between Nara, the dancing girl, in whose veins runs the blood of Shah Jehan, the most famous of the Kings of Delhi, and Clare Stanhope, born and bred in English conventionality, never so pronounced as in the Fifties, is typical of the differences between the East and the West. The rivalry of love threads its way through a series of exciting incidents, culminating in the massacre and the memorable siege of Delhi. This book completes the trilogy of Mr. Pearce's novels of the Indian Mutiny, of which "Love Besieged" and "Red Revenge" were the first and second.

## **The Destiny of Claude.**

MAY WYNNE

Author of "Henri of Navarre," "The Red Fleur de Lys," "Honour's Fetters," etc.

Claude de Marbeille to escape a convent life joins her friend Margot de Ladrennes in Touraine. Jacques Comte de Ladrennes, a hunchback, falls in love with her, and when the two girls go to Paris to enter the suite of the fifteen year old Mary Queen of Scots, he follows and takes service with the Duke of Guise. Claude, however, falls in love with Archie Cameron, an officer of the Scottish Guard, who by accident discovers how Queen Mary has been tricked by her Uncles of Guise into signing papers bequeathing Scotland to France in the event of her dying childless. Cameron is imprisoned, but escapes in time to warn the Scots Commissioners on their way home of this act of treachery. Cameron is followed by a spy of the Guises, and the four Commissioners die by poison. Cameron recovers, and returns to Paris to find that Claude has been sent to some unknown Convent. The rest of the tale relates Cameron's search for his sweetheart, the self-sacrifice of the Comte de Ladrennes, and the repentance and atonement of Margot de Ladrennes, who through jealousy betrays her friend.



## **Susan and the Duke.**

KATE HORN

Author of "Edward and I and Mrs. Honeybun," "The White Owl," "The Lovelocks of Diana," etc.

Lord Christopher Fitzarden, younger brother of the Duke of Cheadle, is the most delightful of young men. He adopts the old family servants destined for the almshouses by the cynical Duke, who bestows upon him the family house in Mayfair. Nanny, his old nurse, keeps him in order. Susan Ringsford, the heroine, is an early visitor. She is in love with Kit, but he falls madly in love with Rosalind Pilkington, the heiress of a rich manufacturer. The contrast between the two girls is strongly drawn. Susan, sweet and refined—a strong character but of insignificant appearance, and Rosalind radiantly beautiful—ambitious and coarse of nature. The whole party go caravanning with Lady Barchester and an affected little poet, and many love scenes are woven into the tour in the New Forest. Susan and the Duke of Cheadle have a conversation—the Duke loves her in silence, and sees that she loves his brother. He gets up a flirtation with Rosalind, who, anxious to be a duchess, throws over Kit immediately. The Duke disillusiones her. Meanwhile Susan and Kit have come together, and the book ends with wedding bells.

## **Lonesome Land.**

B. M. BOWER

A strong, human story in which Valeria Peyson, an Eastern girl, goes out to a desolate Montana town to marry the lover who has preceded her three years before. Unfortunately the lover has not had the moral fibre to stand the unconventionality of Western life, and has greatly deteriorated. However, they marry and live on his ranch, where Valeria finds that the country and her husband are by no means what she thought them. She does her best to make the life endurable and is aided by the kindness of her husband's closest friend, a rough diamond with an honest heart. Out of this situation is unfolded a strong tale of character development and overwhelming love that finds a dramatic outcome in happiness for those most deserving it.

## **Confessions of Perpetua.**

ALICE M. DIEHL

Author of "A Mysterious Lover," "The Marriage of Lenore," etc.

Perpetua is the youngest of three daughters of a baronet, all of whom make wealthy marriages, a duke, a viscount and a colonel sharing the baronet's family. The story opens when Perpetua emerges from the care of her governess and enters society under the auspices of the duchess. She marries against the warnings of the countess and divorces the colonel within three months of their union, and yet all proceeds in a perfectly natural and straightforward manner. The process of disillusion from love's enchantment is well described, and other Perpetuas may well learn a lesson from the heroine's experience. The characters are well drawn and distinct, and the narrative develops dramatic incidents from time to time.

## **A Modern Ahab.**

THEODORA WILSON WILSON

Author of "Bess of Hardendale," "Moll o' the Toll-Bar," etc.

This is a very readable novel in the author's best manner. Rachael Despenser, a successful artist, spends a summer holiday in a Westmoreland village, living at an old farm-house, and making friends of the people. Grimstone, a local baronet, is grabbing the land to make a deer run, and Rachael comes into collision with him, but is adored by his delicate little son. Right-of-way troubles ensue, and violence disturbs the peace. Grimstone's elder son and heir returns from Canada, where he has imbibed Radical notions. He sympathises with the villagers, and is attracted towards Rachael, whom he marries. The baronet determines to oust the farmer whom Rachael had championed, when the tragic death of his delicate little son leads him to relinquish the management of the estate to his heir.

## **The Annals of Augustine**

RAFAEL SABATINI

Author of "Bardelys the Magnificent," "The Lion's Skin," etc.

Mr. Sabatini lays before his readers in "The Annals of Augustine" a startling and poignant human document of the Italian Renaissance. It is the autobiographical memoir of Augustine, Lord of Mondolfo, one of the lesser tyrants of Æmilia, a man pre-natally vowed to the cloister by his over-devout mother. With merciless self-analysis does Augustine in these memoirs reveal his distaste for the life to which he was foredoomed, and his early efforts to break away from the repellant path along which he is being forced. The Lord of Mondolfo's times are the times of the Farnese Pope (Paul III.), whose terrible son, Pier Luigi Farnese, first Duke of Parma, lives again, sinister and ruthless, in these pages. As a mirror of the Cinquecento, "The Annals of Augustine" deserves to take an important place, whilst for swiftness of action and intensity of romantic interest it stands alone.



## **Dagobert's Children.**

L. J. BEESTON

"Mr. Beeston's spirited work is already well known to a large circle of readers, but this book is the most powerful he has yet written, and for plot, dramatic incident, and intensity of emotion reaches a very high level. The successive chapters are alive with all the breath and passion of war, and are written with a vividness and power which holds the reader's interest to the last word."

## **The Redeemer.**

RENÉ BAZIN

Author of "The Children of Alsace," "The Nun," "Redemption," etc.

This is a romance of village life in the Loire country, with love complications which awaken sympathy and absorb interest. Davideé is a junior mistress in the village school, and the story mainly concerns her love attraction and moral restraint. She is drawn towards Maievel Jacquet, a worker in the slate quarries near by, with whom Phrosine, a beautiful young woman who has left her husband, is living. Davideé befriends them, but on the death of their child Maievel goes away, and Phrosine, who dislikes Davideé because of her superior morality, goes in search of her son by her husband. Both return to the village, and Phrosine seeks reunion with Maievel, who refuses her, telling her that their dead son bars the way. Phrosine attributes this to the interposition of Davideé, and ultimately leaves with another lover. There is now no longer any barrier between Maievel and Davideé, who can hence follow her attraction without violating her scruples.

## **The She-Wolf.**

MAXIME FORMONT

Author of "A Child of Chance," etc. Translated from the French by Elsie F. Buckley.

This is a powerful novel of the life and times of Cæsar Borgia, in which history and romance are mingled with a strong hand. The author holds Cæsar guilty of the murder of his brother, and shows a strong motive for the crime. The story of the abduction of Alva Colonna on the eve of her marriage with Proslero Sarelli, when she is carried off to his palace at Rome and becomes his slave-mistress, is related. The subsequent events, more or less following history or tradition, include the introduction of the dark woman of gipsy extraction, who enamours Cæsar, and poisons the wine by which the Colonna and her old lover Sarelli die. Cæsar is shown strong, brutal, unscrupulous and triumphant. The story closes with a description of his last days and death. This novel has been highly popular in France.

## **Her Majesty the Flapper.**

A. E. JAMES

With a picture wrapper of "Her Majesty" in colours.

There is a fresh, natural touch about these episodes in the development of a Flapper which make them breezy and refreshing reading, involving no little amusement. Her Majesty the Flapper is a lady-flapper, of course, neither a bounder nor a cad, but just a flapper. Accessories, willing or unwilling, are her cousins Victoria and Bobbie, a male person over thirty, who tells most of the story, though the Flapper is as irrepressible in the telling of the story as in acting it. Of course, Bobbie is victimised, and the story ends with the coming out of the Flapper, and the final victimisation takes the form of an engagement. Readers will sympathise with Bobbie, and some will envy him.

## **Chaff and the Wind.**

G. VILLIERS STUART

Chaff and the Wind is a novel showing the working of the unseen hand, and telling the story of a man who shirked his destiny, and who was forced to watch the career of another who rose to heights of national fame, while he himself drifted like chaff before the wind. It is a novel of incident illustrating a theory, and is therefore more dramatic than psychological. The action of life and destiny on character is more indicated than the action of character on life.

## **The Marble Aphrodite.**

ANTHONY KIRBY GILL

An imaginative story of a young sculptor who, inspired by Venus, produces an Aphrodite of amazing loveliness and nobility. Carroll, the chief character, is an idealist, a devotee of art, and a worshipper of beauty, and the main theme of the novel is centred in and about his creation of this statue. Other characters include a painter who encourages his young friend's idealism, a wealthy aristocrat of a cynical bent of mind, a beautiful and accomplished actress, a poet, and a society lady married to a man of evil reputation. The conflicting interests of these people, the effects of their actions, tragic and otherwise, the scenes in the studios and the society, theatrical, and Bohemian scenes, including the glimpse given of the night side of London life, form a realistic background or setting for the principal motive, which, though closely interwoven with it, is of a purely imaginative and idealistic character. Psychological analysis enters largely into the author's treatment, and the story reflects here and there certain mental movements of the day.

## **The Poodle-Woman.**

ANNESLEY KENEALY

Author of "Thus Saith Mrs. Grundy."

Miss Annesley Kenealy's new novel deals with the feminine side of the great unrest of our time, and she sets herself to answer the questions "What do Women Want?" and "What is the cause of their great unrest?" It is a charming love story, dealing mainly with two women, a man, and a maunikin. It presents feminism from an entirely fresh standpoint, but polemics are entirely absent. In a series of living moving pictures it shows how the games of life and matrimony are played under rules which put all the best cards of the pack into men's hands. The heroine is an emotional Irish girl, with the reckless romance of the Celt and the chivalry of a woman, who keeps sweet through very bitter experiences. Possessing no world craft she is slave to her heart, and gives and forgives unto seventy times seven. The book is epigrammatic and full of humour.

## **The Romance of Bayard.** LT.-COL. ANDREW C. P.

HAGGARD, D.S.O. Author of "The France of Joan of Arc," "Two Worlds," etc.

"The Romance of Bayard" is one of perennial interest, as a "life," as a "thing of beauty," is a joy for ever. The story of the chevalier, who was "without fear and without reproach" cannot too often be told. The story opens on the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," and its personelle includes Henry of England, Francis of France, the French Queen-mother, the Princess Marguerita, who loved Bayard with intense devotion, and Anne Boleyn, a young French maid of honour. It ends with Bayard's death during the fatal expedition into Italy in 1524. The romance places Marguerita and Anne Boleyn at his side at the last. Col. Haggard's historical romances are all well known and highly popular at the libraries and with the general public, and this one is not likely to fall short of high appreciation.

## **A Durbar Bride.**

CHARLOTTE CAMERON

Author of "A Passion in Morocco," "A Woman's Winter in South America," etc.

This is a wonderfully interesting novel, conducting one through labyrinths of exciting scenes and chapters with not a dull moment in the entire production. It is written in Charlotte Cameron's most brilliant style. In the first chapters the author depicts the misery of a young bride whose husband became hopelessly insane during their honeymoon. The pathetic story graphically narrated of Muriel's unsatisfactory life, neither maid, wife, nor widow, and the injustice of the law which binds a woman until death to a mad man is admirably portrayed. Mrs. Cameron is the only writer who has as yet given us from an eye-witness point of view a romance on the Imperial Durbar at Delhi; where, as the representative of several papers, she had the opportunity of attending the entire ceremonials. The life at the Government Camps, the sweet love story of the hero and heroine, the simple marriage ceremony in Skinner's historic church at Delhi will prove a keen enjoyment to the readers. Their Majesties the Queen, and Queen Alexandra have graciously accepted copies of this novel.



**The Career of Beauty Darling.** DOLF WYLLARDE  
Author of "The Riding Master," "The Unofficial Honeymoon."

"The Career of Beauty Darling" is a story of the musical comedy stage, and endeavours to set forth both the vices and virtues of the life without prejudice. If the temptations are manifold, the author finds much good also in those who pursue this particular branch of the profession, for she says "there are no kinder hearts in the world, I think, than those that beat under the finery of the chorus girl, no better humanity than that which may be found behind the paint and powder and the blistered eyes." Miss Wyllarde has made plain statements in this, her latest book, and has not shrunk from the realism of the life; but, as she says, even the general public knows that the dazzle and glitter from the front of the footlights is a very different view to that which may be seen behind the curtain.

**The Retrospect.** ADA CAMBRIDGE  
Author of "Thirty Years in Australia," "A Little Minx," etc.

"There can be little hesitation in asserting that this is one of the most delightful books of the year."—*Aberdeen Free Press*.

"Miss Cambridge has such a delightful style, and so much of interest to tell us, that the reader closes the book with the sensation of having bidden a dear friend farewell."—*Bristol Times and Mirror*.

"Written throughout with an engaging literary grace."—*Scotsman*.

**Francesca.** CECIL ADAIR  
Author of "The Qualities of Mercy," "Cantacute Towers," etc.

This author possesses all the qualities which make for popularity and can be relied upon to arrest and maintain interest from first to last. The *Guardian* reviewing "Canticute Towers" said—"In it we seem to see a successor of Rosa N. Carey," and those who admire the work of Miss Carey cannot do better than take the hint. A strong human interest always appeals to the reader and satisfies perusal.

**The Strength of the Hills.** HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE  
Author of "A Benedick in Arcady," "Priscilla of the Good Intent," etc.

In this novel Mr. Halliwell Sutcliffe returns to the Haworth Moorland which was the inspiration of all his earlier work; it deals with the strenuous life of the moors sixty years ago and will rank with his strongest and best works. Those who remember our author's "Man of the Moors," "An Episode in Arcady," "A Bachelor in Arcady," and "A Benedick in Arcady" will not hesitate to follow him anywhere across the moorlands in the direction of Arcadia.

**Officer 666.** BARTON W. CURRIE and AUGUSTIN  
McHUGH

An uproarious piece of American wit fresh from the Gaiety Theatre, New York, which will be produced on the London boards and in France some time this autumn. It is from the pen of Mr. Augustin McHugh, who has associated himself with Mr. Barton W. Currie in producing it in novel form. Its dramatic success in America has been phenomenal; and whether as a play or a novel, it will doubtless receive a warm welcome in this country.

**Devil's Brew.** MICHAEL W. KAYE  
Author of "The Cardinal's Past," "A Robin Hood of France," etc.

Jack Armiston, awaking to the fact that life has other meaning than that given it by a fox-hunting squire, becomes acquainted with Henry Hunt, the socialist demagogue, but after many vicissitudes, during which he finds he has sacrificed friends and sweetheart to a worthless propaganda, he becomes instrumental in baulking the Cato Street Conspirators of their plot to murder the members of the Cabinet, and eventually regains his old standing—and Pamela. A spirited story.



## **The Fruits of Indiscretion.** SIR WILLIAM MAGNAY

Author of "The Long Hand," "Paul Burdon," etc.

This is a story of murder and mystery, in which the interest is well sustained and the characters are convincing. It is absorbing without being melodramatic, and thrilling without being sensational. There is to be a wedding at a country house on the eve of which the best man is killed in the hunting field. Captain Routham is asked to take his place, but disappears. His body is found on the railway track. Rolt, a famous detective, is put on the scent, and gradually probes the mystery. Routham had had a love affair with the heroine in former years, and had been black-mailing her. There is a rascally lawyer in the case who is killed in a carriage accident, and is so saved criminal consequences. In the end the heroine marries her lover.

## **The Tragedy of the Nile.** DOUGLAS SLADEN

Author of "The Unholy Estate," "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," etc.

A military novel dealing with the fate and re-conquest of Khartum. This is even more military than Mr. Sladen's "Tragedy of the Pyramids" and "The Unholy Estate." Mr. Sladen is at his best when he is describing battles, and the book is full of them; but, like Mr. Sladen's other books, it is also full of romance. The author, never content with an ordinary plain-sailing engagement between two young persons, selects one of the *cruces* which present themselves in real life and love. This time it is the case of a beautiful white woman who, being captured at the fall of Khartum, has to enter the harem of Wad-el-Nejumi, the bravest of all the generals of the Mahdi. When she is rescued on the fatal field of Toski, the question arises, Can a white man marry her? There are great figures standing forth in Mr. Sladen's pages—above all, the heroic Gordon in his last great moments at Khartum, and Wad-el-Nejumi, who stormed Khartum and died so grandly at Toski.

## **The Memoirs of Mimosa.** Edited by ANNE ELLIOT

This is a book calculated to make as great a sensation as the famous *Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff*, which electrified a whole continent some years ago; or *The Diary of a Lost One*, which set Germany ringing more recently. It is the intimate and unflinching confession of a brilliant, erotic, and undisciplined woman, who resolves to "live every moment of her life," and succeeds in so doing at the cost of much suffering to herself and others. Her mixture of worldliness, sentiment, fancy, passion, and extraordinary *jote de vivre* make her a fascinating study of a type somewhat rare. At her death she bequeathed these Memoirs to the woman friend who edits them and presents them to the world. We get the woman's point of view in all matters—poetry, politics, sport, music, the stage, and, dominating all, the great problems of sex.

## **The Return of Pierre.** DONAL HAMILTON HAINES

With a frontispiece from a painting by Edouard Detaille.

This is not a novel about the Franco-Prussian War, but the very human story of Pierre, with some of the scenes of the heroic struggle as a background. Pierre, a country lad, is the central figure. Other prominent figures are the woman Pierre loves, her father—a fine old Colonel of Dragoons—and a German spy, not without attractive qualities, whose fate becomes strangely entangled with theirs. The book abounds in striking situations, including the discovery and escape of the spy—the departure of the Dragoons for the war—the remorse of a French General who feels personally responsible for the men he has lost—night in a hospital-tent—the last flicker of the defence of Paris and the entry of the German troops.

## **The Incurable Dukane.** GEORGE C. SHEDD

This is a vigorous and inspiring story of Western life. Jimmy Dukane, son of a cement king, who, disgusted with his son's extravagances, gives him a limited sum, and orders him to go and inspect a dam in course of construction in Nevada, or by way of a pleasant alternative—starve. Jimmy goes and passes through numerous adventures. Has his outfit stolen on his arrival at the nearest station, is knocked about, bullied and impounded by one of the dam men, and has to work as a navvy. Showing grit, he works his way up, and discovers that the manager is defrauding the company, and constructing a fatally faulty dam. Taking command, he saves the Company's reputation for sound workmanship. There is a love story in it, and Enid, the fair, fearless daughter of the superintendent, enables all to end well.

## **The Thread of Proof.**

HEADON HILL

Author of "Troubled Waters," etc.

The principal theme of this volume is the abnormal astuteness of the conductor of a railway restaurant-car, whose power of observation and deduction enables him to solve the many absorbing "mysteries" that come under his ken, and which, as a preventer and detector of crime, put him on a par with any of the great puzzle-readers of fiction. Mr. Headon Hill goes direct to the point, and carries the reader rapidly along from the first page to the last.

## **A Robin Hood of France.**

MICHAEL W. KAYE

Author of "The Duke's Vengeance," etc., etc.

Hated at court and falsely accused of murder, the young *Sieur de Pontenac* flees to the Forest of Fontainebleau, and becomes the leader of a band of robbers (*King Mandrin*), beloved of the oppressed *canaille*, but hated of the nobles, whom he defies and robs. *Claire d'Orgueil*, the only child of the *Comte d'Orgueil*, having lost heavily at cards, wagers the winner—who has her in his power, and who hopes to force her to marry him—that she will lure "*King Mandrin*" into the power of his enemies; but, arriving in the Forest of Fontainebleau, ends in falling in love with the "*Robin Hood of France*."

## **Neighbours of Mine.**

R. ANDOM

Author of "We Three and Troddles," "In Fear of a Throne," etc.

With 70 original illustrations by L. GUNNIS.

This broadly farcical story of types and incidents of suburban life will afford as much amusement as the famous "*Troddles*" books which have in volume form successfully appealed to something like 200,000 readers of all classes, and should prove as popular with those who like a rollicking story. Now and again the author conveys a moral, discreetly, but generally he is content to be extravagantly amusing in depicting adventures, which are sufficiently out of the ordinary to be termed "singular." The book is cleverly and amusingly illustrated throughout the text by a popular artist, who has admirably succeeded in catching the drollery of the narrative.

## **The Loves of Stella.**

MRS. SHIERS-MASON

Author of "*Hubert Sherbrook, Priest*."

*Stella O'Donovan*, a very poor but also very beautiful and quite unsophisticated Irish girl, lives in an old castle on a lovely but lonely Bay on the Irish coast. She has Spanish blood in her veins, and much of the impulsive and fascinating temperament of the *Andalusians*. Becoming heiress to a million of money, she decides to go to London and enter Society. Before her departure, a young Norwegian sculptor, *Olaf Johansen*, of striking appearance, comes to reside in the village. He at once falls in love with *Stella*, who returns his affection, but who, doubtful of herself, flees to London. Here she appears to meet *Olaf* again, but it is his twin brother impersonating him. *Stella* at once succumbs to his love-making, and many highly dramatic scenes follow.

## **Damosel Croft.**

MURRAY GILCHRIST

*World* says—"As good as taking a holiday to read this tranquil tale of Peakland and its people. . . . The book is redolent of peace and rural beauty and restfulness."

*Standard* says—" . . . delicious interiors, glimpses of country shining with happiness, old customs and traditions, leaving us at the last with a sense of rest and tranquillity, worth, for its refreshment, a thousand plots, a thousand popular romances."



## **A Babe in Bohemia.**

FRANK DANBY

Author of "The Heart of a Child," "Dr. Phillips," etc.

This author is not a prolific writer, and, therefore, every work from her pen is awaited with much interest. She stands alone among the best modern writers for originality and freshness in style. This full length novel has been out of print for many years and has now been practically rewritten by the author. Although the thread of the story remains every page has been extensively revised, and will be found to be as good as anything recently done by this popular writer.

## **The Consort.** MRS. EVERARD COTES (SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN). Author of "The Burnt Offering," "Cousin Cinderella," "The Path of a Star," etc.

The story of a little man married to a great woman, of their relations and interactions, their battles and despairs, written round the strong and familiar interests of passion and power. The story moves at a gallop, and it is for the reader to meditate and moralise when the book is laid aside.

## **The Villa Mystery.**

HERBERT FLOWERDEW

Author of "The Second Elopement," "The Third Wife," etc.

Woven in with the mystery of a crime as baffling as anything imagined by Gaboriau, the pretty love story of Esmond Hare and Elsa Armandy engages the reader's sympathy from the moment of their first meeting. This is in a lonely country road, at midnight, where Elsa is on her knees picking up handfuls of sovereigns that do not exactly belong to her, and the atmosphere of mingled mystery and romance continues to surround their moving and unconventional love story up to the moment of its happy ending.

## **Prince and Priest.**

BERYL SYMONS

Author of "A Lady of France."

A romance of mediæval France, which contains atmosphere, colour, life and movement. 1207 is the date when the story opens. Count Bertrand de Crein falls in love with the beautiful Lady Rosamund, whom he is escorting to the Lord of Gervandan in Toulouse, whose wife she is to be. In the meantime the Count of Toulouse is threatened with Rome's curse and an armed crusade to put down heresy. In the subsequent siege and sack of Beziers, Rosamund's husband is killed, and the love of Rosamund and de Crein culminates in marriage. The book is full of excitement, adventure, thrilling escapes, and heart-stirring romance.

## **Brass Faces.**

CHARLES McEVOY

An exciting modern story of grip and power, some of the most startling episodes of which concern the kidnapping of a girl who has been turned out of house and home by her father and imprisoned in a house in Kensington. She is rescued by a bachelor, who in turn finds himself in a delicate position. An American female detective plots his arrest and ruin. The story rushes on in a whirl of excitement through a maze of plots and counterplots to a dramatic *dénouement*.

## **The Meteoric Benson.**

VINCENT MILLS-MALET

A decidedly new note has been struck in this most readable and interesting novel. As the name indicates it is an aeroplane story, and one of those rare books which must be read at a sitting; incident follows incident in ever increasing interest, until the reader, breathless from excitement, learns from the last page "what really did happen."



**Between Two Stools** (Fifth Edition). By RHODA BROUGHTON. Author of "Red as a Rose is She," "Cometh up as a Flower," etc.

The *Times* says:—"In point of plot, 'Between Two Stools' belongs to the category of Mr. Maxwell's 'Guarded Flame.' . . . Few readers, we imagine, would fail to fall in love with so fresh and delightful a heroine as Arethusa. The scene at the end reveals Miss Broughton at her very best."

**The Justice of the Duke.** (3rd ed.) By RAFAEL SABATINI. Author of "The Shame of Motley," "The Trampling of the Lilies," "Cesare Borgia," "The Lion's Skin," etc.

The *Globe* says:—"What Mr. Sabatini does not know about the life and times of Cesare Borgia is not worth considering . . . excellent."

**Exotic Martha** (Third Edition). By DOROTHEA GERARD. Author of "The City of Enticement," etc.

*Truth* says:—"The story is full of incident, and is told in a lively and humorous fashion."

The *Globe* says:—"The plot is worked out with much ingenuity, and its interest enhanced by the picture of life in the Dutch Colony at Java."

**The Unholy Estate; or, the Sins of the Fathers** (Fifth Edition). By DOUGLAS SLADEN. Author of "A Japanese Marriage," "The Admiral," "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," etc.

The *Times* says:—"A vivacious and resourceful novel."

The *World* says:—"An exciting and delightful story filled with marvellously vivid pictures of life in Cairo. One which has not a dull line in it, and will certainly entertain men as much as it will interest and move women."

**The Woman-Hunter** (Fourth Edition). By ARABELLA KENEALY. Author of "The Irresistible Mrs. Ferrers," etc.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* says:—"A strong story, admirably told, full of life and passion, and quite the best novel this gifted authoress has written."

The *World* says:—"Clever all through, and those who like psychological novels will readily admit that Miss Kenealy has most skilfully dealt with emotions which are not easily conveyed in cold print."

**The Consort** (Third Edition). By MRS. EVERARD COTES  
(Sara Jeannette Duncan)

The *Daily News* says:—"This is a very clever novel."

The *Daily Telegraph* describes it as "a subtly told story, one which needs a psychological interest on the part of those who peruse it if they are to extract the full flavour."

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